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EUGÉNIE, EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH.

EUGENIE

EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

A POPULAR SKETCH

BY

CLARA TSCHUDI

Authorised Translation from the Norwegian

BY

E. M. COPE

WITH COLOURED PORTRAIT

FROM THE PICTURE IN THE VERSAILLES GALLERY



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PREFACE

I AM encouraged by the success which has attended my translation of *Marie Antoinette*, by Clara Tschudi, to offer to the public a second monograph by the same gifted authoress, whose renown as a writer dates from its appearance in 1889, previously to which she had undertaken only a few short essays and biographies.

Eugénie, Empress of the French, met with an enthusiastic reception in Scandinavia, and has since been widely read in excellent translations both in Germany and Italy.

At the request of the authoress, I have used the second edition of her work, and have ventured to append a few notes, taken from English newspapers, referring mainly to the Prince Imperial and Dr. Evans.

Professor Kirkpatrick, of Edinburgh University, has a high opinion of Clara Tschudi as a writer, and has written to me: "Her *Eugénie*, which I read with great interest in the original, and reviewed favourably, seemed to me at the time well worthy of being translated into English."

The work is not profoundly historical, but it is no superficial sketch of the Empress, the salient points of whose character have been grasped, and the motives for many of her actions explained.

The authoress has tried to be impartial in her judgment, and to distinguish, as in the case of Marie Antoinette, between weaknesses and serious faults; though here the difficulty has been increased by the nearness of events, and the yet lingering fierceness of the light that beats upon a throne. The "clear-sightedness of the historian of the future" on this point is truthfully alluded to by the authoress on the last page.

My share in the work has afforded me continual pleasure, and I confidently hope that English readers will enjoy *Eugénie, Empress of the French*, as much as I have done,

E. M. COPE.

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EUGÉNIE

EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

"Le passage est bien court de la joie aux douleurs."

VICTOR HUGO,

CHAPTER I.

THE POSITION OF EUGÉNIE'S FAMILY— HER CHILDHOOD.

IN the beginning of this century there was living in Malaga a tradesman of the name of Kirkpatrick, a descendant of a well-known Scotch noble family, who had been obliged to flee from its native land on the fall of the Stuarts. He was earning a livelihood as a dealer in colonial wares, and also by the sale of wine, which he himself dispensed to his customers in a room at the back of his shop.

His business prospered and he became a wealthy man. Then he took to exporting Spanish wines, though he did not, on this

account, relinquish his species of club, and his daughters made themselves useful by attracting customers to the house.

It may be thought that in this tradesman's home, filled with the interests of buying, selling and other practical duties, there would be little or no time to think of the high family traditions of the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn.

But such was not the case. The pretty daughters were perfectly well aware that they belonged to an old and noble race, and encouraged themselves in the belief that they would some day recover their rightful position.

There is no place in the world where men are so enthusiastic and tenacious about reminiscences as in Spain. But rich as this country is in memories, she has so long been severed from the rest of Europe, that she has forgotten how to measure herself by other kingdoms, and has lost the power of judging herself by comparison with them. The thought of the victories which Spaniards have won in bygone days leads them to believe that conquest will still be easy. They turn their looks towards the Alhambra and its magnificent monuments, but forget that their land has fallen from its former height. They do not see that those

castles of which they are so proud, exist merely as dead reminders of vanished greatness, while they are especially blind to the fact that their nation, once the bravest and the most powerful in Europe, has ceased to play a part in the European Concert.

The most ambitious as well as the most beautiful of Kirkpatrick's daughters was Manuela. Her vanity was insatiable and her pride of race knew no bounds, for, in spite of her Scotch descent, she was a true child of Spain.

While she was handing the wine and entertaining the gentlemen who assembled in her father's back parlour, she was mentally contemplating the coat of arms of her ancestors. The traditions of the past helped her to forget the narrow circumstances of the present, and the fact that she was the daughter of a tradesman—in short, the recollections of the glories of a bygone age carried her lightly through the humiliations of the day.

And yet, although so closely connected with the land of her birth, Manuela was far from being a true Spaniard.

A Spanish woman is, as a rule, indolent and ignorant. She is too indolent to improve herself and acquire cultured tastes, and frequently

too ignorant to grasp the fact that her dreams of greatness are but empty fancies. But it was otherwise with Kirkpatrick's daughter. She, too, as we have said, indulged in romantic enthusiasm for a bygone age; but even this was restrained by belief in a glorious future. She was a Spaniard, but at the same time she possessed the energy of the Scotchwoman, a quality without which her dreams and wishes could never have been realised.

The young girl wanted to see the world, but there was nobody that could help her, she could only rely upon her own charms and persevere in her determination to make a brilliant match. In order to gain her object she was willing to overcome any obstacle, to employ any means.

Among the officers stationed in Malaga, most of whom regularly frequented Kirkpatrick's wine-shop, was a Colonel in a Spanish artillery regiment, Don Cipriano, Count Téba. He and his elder brother, Count Montijo, had both gained renown as brave soldiers in the early part of the century. Their political views were different, for the elder brother opposed the French, while the younger, on the contrary, was an ardent supporter of Napoleon. He had served under him, and it is reported that it was

this Spaniard who in 1814 fired the last shot against the allied troops.

Count Téba had been a handsome man in his youth, but he had lost an eye in battle. He was no longer young, nor even particularly attractive, when Manuela Kirkpatrick first made his acquaintance, and he is even described as somewhat of a simpleton and stingy. But all this did not alarm the young girl, who looked upon his heart as a fortress that might be conquered without any great difficulty; and, regardless of his lack of personal attraction, she set herself to study his pedigree and family connections.

The result of this genealogical research surpassed even her most sanguine expectations. It assured her that Spain's purest *sangre azul* (blue blood) flowed in Téba's veins. He was descended from a noble family of distinction, named Porto-Carrero, who had emigrated from Genoa to Estremadura in the fourteenth century, and through marriage had acquired the right to bear some of Spain's most famous names, Guzman, Cordova, La Cerda, Leira, etc., and who, moreover, was a Spanish grandee in the threefold title of Téba, Banos, and Mora. In the ranks of his ancestors she found, among

others, the hero Alphonso Perez of Guzman, Gonsalvo of Cordova, surnamed "the great leader," together with Antonio Leve, one of Charles the Fifth's most renowned generals. It is true that Téba was a second son, but then his elder brother was unmarried, and if she shared the fortune of the younger man, Manuela felt she might fairly reckon on gratifying her ambition, and by patient waiting, eventually occupy the rank she so ardently longed for.

Her father's increased prosperity, and her own extraordinary beauty, drew younger and far more attractive suitors to her feet; but if one or another of these had ever thought himself the favoured one, he was mercilessly thrust on one side, for after these revelations Manuela would not delay a single minute to begin her work for the desired end. She treated the Count with marked graciousness and respectful deference. Upon him—and him alone—she lavished her smiles, her ardent glances, her bewitching loveliness. In his simplicity he took her advances for devotion, which flattered his vanity, and roused what had been at first but a passing flirtation into ardent passion.

Without consulting his family, Cipriano Guzman Palafox y Porto-Carrero, Count of Téba,

Marquis of Ardales, afterwards Count of Montijo and Miranda and Duke of Peneranda, married Maria Manuela, the daughter of Kirkpatrick the tradesman.

Their salon became the rendezvous for officers of wealth and rank, who were charmed with the wit, beauty, and hospitality of the young hostess. Her ambition increased but the more, though she revelled in her present triumph.

Malicious tongues found pleasure in circulating reports about the licence that reigned in her home, which eventually reached the ears of the elder brother, Count Montijo, who had disapproved of his brother's unsuitable marriage from the very first, and was now exasperated on hearing these accounts of his sister-in-law. He was determined she should not inherit from him, and married at an advanced age.

Manuela was beside herself till prudence prevailed over wrath. Instead of sulkily withdrawing herself from her new relations, she sought to gain their favour; and it was the less difficult to reconcile herself to her brother-in-law's marriage, as, to her indescribable joy, it proved without issue.

Tired of Malaga, where everything reminded her of the petty surroundings from which she

had escaped, she longed to change her place of residence, and induced her husband to turn his back on the city of her birth. They accordingly left with their little daughter, Fransiska Teresia (born 1825), for Granada, where the Count's brother was then residing.

May 5th, 1826—the same day on which the great Napoleon had closed his eyes a few years previously—the inhabitants of Granada were terrified by a fearful earthquake. The Countess of Téba was sitting in the garden when it began; she was taken ill at once, and confined in the open air of her second daughter, the future Empress of the French.

The child, who from her birth had a wondering, thoughtful, melancholy expression, was christened Maria Eugenia Ignacia Augustina, and her Uncle stood godfather to her.

Eugénie's mother possessed a clear, well-developed mind, and was, moreover, a thorough woman of the world. She was a leader in conversation and inexhaustible in piquant allusions; better informed and possessed of considerably more humour than is usual with her countrywomen. It was therefore natural that by means of her personal loveliness and charm of manner, she was enabled to win over her sister-in-law,

and succeed in securing the favour of her brother-in-law. Count Téba and his wife were welcome guests, and treated with marked respect and deference when present at any festivity in the Montijo house.

But Manuela was not yet in what she considered her right element; she longed for a freer, less shackled life, and craved especially to mount still higher on the social ladder.

Her wish was to be gratified, for in 1834 Count Téba stood by the grave of his childless brother. His wife felt that her aim was attained, and persuaded her husband to take up his residence in Madrid.

The domestic life of Eugénie's parents had been far from comfortable. Her mother was fond of coquetry, extravagance, and pleasure, while her father's jealousy, violence, and increasing parsimony soon expelled all peace from their home. This want of conjugal harmony had been all the more deep and enduring, as the Countess had never entertained any very tender feeling towards her husband.

The situation became still worse after their arrival in the capital, when Manuela sought to ally herself with prominent and influential persons, though at the same time she undisguisedly

shared in equivocal amusements, and thus rendered home and life utterably miserable to her husband. The Count, who before the death of his brother was possessed of but a meagre fortune, had begun by giving his children a modest, even poor and scanty education. After his accession to his brother's title and riches, he saw no reason to change his principles, and wished his daughters to be brought up, as though they were to remain in poverty and must be inured to contentment with little, even with privation.

His wife had somewhat different ideas. She wished them to be intelligent, capable women, but at the same time she longed to see and enjoy life herself, and to have them with her. Disturbances had broken out in Spain the same year in which her brother-in-law died, and many families of position fled from the tumult, as well as from the cholera which appeared about the same time. The Countess Montijo made use of the dispersion of the higher classes as an excuse to leave her husband, whose duties as Senator detained him in Madrid, and on the 28th July, 1834, she quitted Spain with her two daughters and her little son Paco, who died soon afterwards; and in the company of her

children, separated from her husband, she entered on a gay life of travel, dividing her time between London, Paris, and the fashionable watering-places, where friends and admirers congregated around her.

Several of these undoubtedly belonged to the class who revel in the pleasures of an ephemeral life and prefer sensual enjoyment to intellectual pursuits. But amongst those who sought her were also to be found men eminent for their knowledge and attainments, of whom the most intimate were the philosopher Laborde, the renowned author Prosper Mérimée, and Henry Beyle (Stendahl).

Mérimée had previously made the acquaintance, while travelling in Spain, of Count Téba, who had introduced him into his family circle. The poet felt sincere admiration for the Count, as well as for the Countess, who enchanted him by her beauty, her loveliness, and the many acquirements which she had made her own, so that he was genuinely pleased to meet her again in Paris. Manuela was thoroughly conversant with the history of Spain, and she gave him the subject for several of his stories of her country, among them for his famous "Carmen."

Henry Beyle was also a frequent guest in

the salon of Madame Montijo, and entertained Fransiska and Eugénie with anecdotes of the great military leader Napoleon; and the little girls listened eagerly to all he told them, for the Spanish grandee had brought up his daughters in respect and admiration for the memory of the French Emperor.

It could not escape the mother's sharp sight that the beauty of her younger daughter was attracting attention on all sides, where men admired her regular features, her singularly glossy, golden hair, and the earnest look in her large, clear eyes; and though she certainly never guessed that Eugénie was to become the joint sovereign of one of the most powerful countries in Europe, still, with a mother's natural pride, she began to hope that this child would be able to push her way yet higher than the Countess herself had done.

Although Fransiska and Eugénie at first accompanied her from place to place, she watched carefully over them wherever they were, and whatever extravagances she may have allowed herself at this time, justice requires us to point out that she kept her young innocent daughters away from everything that could have sullied their moral purity.

In 1837 the future Empress and her sister were placed as boarders in the Sacré Cœur Convent in the Rue de Varennes, Paris, where they were entered under the names of Fransiska and Eugénie Palafox. The younger, who was confirmed in the convent, is described by those who were there with her as a lively, attractive girl, much liked by the nuns and her companions.

In order to pave the way for the grandeur and happiness which the Countess Montijo counted upon for her daughters, she tried to gain admittance to the Court of Madrid, and returned to Spain while they were being educated in Paris.

On hearing that her husband was ill she hastened to him, and when told that the malady was serious, she sent a messenger for the children, who at once left Paris accompanied by the English teacher, Miss Flowers. As they approached Madrid the Spanish grandee, father of the Empress Eugénie of France, was already dead, having breathed his last March 15th, 1839.

CHAPTER II.

HER YOUTH.

THE Countess Montijo acquired some political importance after the death of her husband, when General Narvaez was the most powerful man in Spain. He was as little able, as so many others, to resist the beauty and intelligence of the Countess, and it has even been asserted that he became her lover. The great men of Madrid vied with each other for the *entrée* to her Sunday receptions, where the highest nobility, the members of the Cortès, diplomatists, and foreigners famous in art or science, were to be found.

She passed the summer with her daughters on her estate, Carabanchel, which had belonged to her husband's family for many generations. In spite of her frivolous behaviour, which was universally known, the Countess was much esteemed in Madrid, where she was called "a woman with head and heart." She was recognised among her acquaintances as a staunch

friend, and merry, devoted crowds accompanied her each season to the country. Lively, humorous, and attractive as she was, life could not be otherwise than cheerful and free from monotony with such a hostess. She loved music, and could play from memory all the operas in vogue at that time. She was an ardent theatre-goer, invited actors and actresses to her house, and had whole operas performed on her private stage in the country. She was as well acquainted with the literature of France as with that of Spain. She enjoyed planting hundreds of trees on the estate, and, with her rich imagination, seemed to be already revelling in their shade and magnificence.

One of her contemporaries, August Filon, speaks of the life at Carabanchel, and says of the amiable hostess :

“She made all around her dance and sing. She scattered pleasures and created happiness on every side. She brought about marriages, and amused her fellow-beings till the last day of her life.”

When her daughters entered the gay world of Madrid for the first time after the expiration of their year of mourning for their father, Fransiska—or “Paca,” as she was called by a pet name in Spanish—was sixteen and Eugénie

in her fifteenth year. They were strikingly different, but both very beautiful. Fransiska was darker than her sister, of slighter build, and with a gentler but less characteristic expression than Eugénie. They excited universal admiration, opinions differing as to which was the more beautiful, and their admirers divided themselves into two distinct camps.

Eager as the young men of Madrid were to frequent the society of her daughters, the Countess Montijo was well aware that her utmost prudence was needed if she wished to realise the lofty dreams she entertained with reference to their future. And in order that Fransiska and Eugénie should escape the rocks and shoals on which her own reputation had been wrecked, she endeavoured in the meantime to keep at a safe distance every suitor whom she did not consider eligible as a son-in-law.

Among those who sought the favour of the young Countesses she found but one whom she thought worthy of the honour, the Duke of Berwick and Alba.¹ She encouraged him by

¹ One of the highest grandees of Spain, and a descendant of the celebrated statesman and general, Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba, who, under Philip II., was stadtholder in the Netherlands, and conquered Portugal.

every means in her power, gave him permission to accompany her daughters on horseback, to the theatres and into general society, where he was soon looked upon as one of the trusted friends of the house. His companionship added to the pleasure of the sisters, he became the main subject of their thoughts; and, as he carefully avoided preferring one to the other, he cleverly contrived to please them both, while each considered herself the object of his tender attentions.

Eugénie loved Alba with the exaggerated enthusiasm of a first attachment, and endowed his character with every splendid and attractive quality; while, excited as she was by the glowing pictures she had created, she dreamed that she was beloved in return.

A sharper observer would probably have detected signs that she was mistaken. But Eugénie did not reflect, her passion blinded her, and she simply trusted him without weighing his behaviour.

On the other hand, the designing mother, who had often practically experienced the faithlessness of men, began to fear that he had no intention of choosing either of them as his companion for life, and the next time he came to her house

she seriously represented to him that he must either declare himself or discontinue his visits to herself and her daughters.

The Duke replied to this remark by immediately soliciting the hand of her elder daughter.

When Fransiska, beaming with joy, hastened away to communicate the important news to her younger sister, she found her lying in bed. At first she thought that she was asleep, but on approaching close to her she discovered to her consternation that her eyes were staring wildly, that her cheeks were wet with perspiration, and that her features were contorted by convulsions. Eugénie had taken poison.

Fransiska's scream of anguish speedily brought her mother and the maid, who sent for a doctor. He succeeded in rousing her, but a long, serious illness followed, and it was during the delirium of fever that those around her learnt that hidden behind a door, Eugénie had been witness to the demand of the Duke, and then, filled with despair, had resolved to kill herself.

In nearly every human life one can point to some circumstance which has exercised a strong influence on the character, and through this upon the future life. In Eugénie's career we may

dare to look upon this rejected devotion as *the* special occurrence that materially influenced her development. Life on this occasion had appeared to her in all its reality, and a brief moment had sufficed to teach her what many another learns but slowly from the pages of bitter experience.

The young girl's pride overcame her affection for her sister's husband, but at the same time it encouraged her to remember her deep humiliation, her cruel, unexpected disappointment, and the impossibility of forgetting the affront she had suffered. When happy and honoured—possibly even on her throne—there may have been moments when this apparently long-healed sore would momentarily burst open, and remind her of the tortures of her early youth.

Eugénie's attempt at suicide had proved a failure, but there were torments of another kind that awaited her when released from the feverish wanderings of delirium. Each day and each hour of the day, she had to witness her sister's joy, hardly knowing how to endure the sorrowful pity of her relations and the consciousness that her brother-in-law was cognisant of her secret.

She regained her health slowly, but even when

pronounced out of danger her recovery was not complete. Her whole nervous system was shaken, and a slight shudder, a twitching of the eyelids which she never entirely lost, sudden fits of depression and anxiety which would come on in the midst of enjoyment, hysterical weeping when anything disturbed her, may all be attributed to the poison which she had taken in her youth. But the circumstance produced still more serious results upon her character. The shy, retiring young girl became an eccentric, exacting coquette, who sought forgetfulness of the past in a vortex of dissipation, and with unwearied restlessness that nothing could calm allowed still freer scope to her vanity and ambition.

As a child she had always preferred the athletic exercises of boys to the quiet recreation of girls, and as a woman she excelled in riding, swimming, and fencing. She was to be seen every afternoon in Madrid, galloping through the streets on an unsaddled horse, smoking a cigar or a cigarette.

She invented fancy costumes which she alone could wear, and often adopted the becoming national dress of Andalusia. She frequented the theatres, public amusements generally, and

was an interested spectator at bull-fights. It was not only that she was present at these exhibitions, but she was not above striking the bull with her tiny foot as it was being led into the arena. One of the toreadors was her declared admirer, and she presented him with a magnificent red cap embroidered in gold, her own handiwork. It was a rare occurrence for her to be absent from these gruesome performances, where, wearing her Andalusian costume and sitting in the front row among the most eager, noisy spectators, the Countess Eugénie never failed to attract universal attention.

We have the following enthusiastic description of her by one who was present with her at a performance :—

“ Her slender figure is well defined by a costly bodice, which enhances her beauty and elegance. Her dainty hand is armed with a riding-whip instead of a fan, for she generally arrives at the circus on a wild Andalusian horse, and in her belt she carries a sharp-pointed dagger. Her little feet are encased in red satin boots. Her head is crowned with her broad golden plaits, interwoven with pearls and real flowers; her clear brow shines with youth and beauty, and her gentle blue eyes sparkle

from beneath the long lashes which almost conceal them. Her exquisitely-formed nose, her mouth, fresher than a rose-bud, the perfect oval of her face, the loveliness of which is only equalled by her graceful bearing, arouses the admiration of all. She is the recognised queen of beauty. It is she who crowns the victorious toreador, and her white hands present him with the prize due to his courage or agility, while she accompanies the gift with her most captivating smile."

The maidenly coyness which had made Eugénie so retiring in her early youth was gone ; but she was more lovely, more bewitching than ever, in the possession of that magnetic beauty, which is sometimes a result of the deep sorrow through which a woman has had to fight her way.

Madrid's most eligible suitors raved about her, and she encouraged princes and dukes to pay court to her.

Her mother's persistence and astuteness, combined with Narvaez's zeal and influence, had induced Queen Isabella to appoint her one of her maids - of - honour. But her position at Court was not an enviable one, as her beauty and coquetry aroused violent jealousy on the part of the young Queen.

Nobody seriously sought her hand; even her admirers were not tempted to take home a wife who frequently appeared in man's attire, who originated the most striking and conspicuous bathing costumes for herself in order to inspire amazement and homage, and in whose hand a riding-whip and dagger were quite as much at home as a bouquet or fan.

Eugénie, her mother, and the Duchess of Alba took a lively share in the festivities that were held on the occasion of Queen Isabella's marriage with her cousin, Don Francisco d'Assiz, Duke of Cadiz, and that of her sister, the Infanta Louise, with Louis Philippe's son, the Duc de Montpensier, which were solemnised on the same day, October 10th, 1846. The French princes who were in Spain for the weddings were among Eugénie's declared admirers, and she went for long rides with the Duc de Montpensier, and danced and coquetted with the Prince de Joinville. But she preferred the society of the Duc d'Aumale, in whose company she daily visited the museums of Madrid. The beauty-loving Duc was enchanted by her appearance, and although fate wrested the throne of France from his family and put "the Spanish girl" in the place of his

revered mother, he never forgot the bewitching companion whose acquaintance he had made in Madrid.¹

In spite of many eccentricities there is something fresh and daring, something fascinating in the recklessness of Eugénie's youth. Her independent character would brook no control; she despised caution, and carried out every caprice without reflection.

But while, as we have said, the admiration of men never led them to think of matrimony, it did not escape her that malicious slander was busied about her reputation. Yet this did not in the least lessen her craving for adventurous amusements, for it was not only a temptation to her vanity to see the grandees of Spain at her feet, but still more enticing to one of her mettle to court the verdict of the multitude.

With equal disregard, she soon began to treat slightly the manners and customs of the Court, and amused herself in direct opposition

¹ A few years ago the yachts of the Duc d'Aumale and of the ex-Empress Eugénie were anchored side by side in the Bay of Naples. The Duc d'Aumale, who had not met Eugénie during all those years, asked to be allowed to visit her on board. They talked of the merry wedding festivities in Madrid and recalled the memories of half a century ago. "What a lovely young girl you were, Empress!" the Duke said warmly. "And what a delightful, courteous young man you were," replied the ex-Empress.

to etiquette, by taking evening walks in company with one of the young pages. Tidings of these romantic wanderings reached the ears of the Queen, who, though giving the very worst moral example herself, nevertheless required that her ladies should behave with dignity, and both the maid and the page were summarily dismissed.

Through the mediation of Narvaez the Countess Montijo was appointed, the year following Isabella's marriage, to the highest post that a Spanish lady can occupy at Court: she was selected in October, 1847, as the Queen's Camarera—Mayor, or first Lady of Honour. Prosper Mérimée wrote to his friend on the occasion:—

“So you have already become Camarera—Mayor, and you are satisfied! This is sufficient to content me. You can make the post profitable—that is enough! But you may say what you like, Countess, you are made for a restless life; and it would be ridiculous to wish Cæsar a peaceful existence as second citizen in Rome!”

It would probably have been easy for the Countess to retain the appointment she had gained, if her feverish, passionate heart had not made her forget all prudence. She entered into a most indiscreet liaison with a young Italian

adventurer, who decamped with her diamonds. Having thus overstepped all the bounds of propriety, three months after her instalment, she was dismissed by Queen Isabella, who intimated to her that she would do well to leave Madrid.

Both mother and daughter were thus driven with scorn and derision from their posts at the Spanish Court.

Like all true Spaniards the Countess Eugénie was a zealous Roman Catholic, and had been brought up from her earliest years with the deepest veneration for the Pope; and besides, her life in the convent had not been without importance to her from a religious point of view. Her reverence for the Romish Church had here been developed into devotion which bordered on fanaticism, and formed a weapon which her opponents used in after years to injure her when Empress, and not in vain.

Finally, she had learnt to understand that those who consecrate themselves to religion and those who fill their lives with vain joys are divided into two different societies, almost into two worlds. The considerate, self-denying tenderness shown by the nuns was in marked contrast with all that she had seen in her parents' disunited home, and had touched the young girl with a breath of

peace and happiness. Ever since that time she had looked upon the Church as an island to which the shipwrecked in life could flee and rest awhile.

Now, in the midst of exciting gaieties, she felt ever more and more the emptiness which surrounded her, and the void in her own inner life. She was seized with a heartfelt longing for religion, which she practised and clung to in ever-increasing fervour; and at the same time that she was seen dashing through the streets of Madrid every afternoon, and attending the circus with enthusiastic delight in the evening, she was also to be found early each morning kneeling in church absorbed in prayer.

Half veiled and enveloped in her handsome mantilla, the pious worshipper attracted no less admiration than the reckless rider, the coquettish woman of the world, and the excited spectator of the bull-fight. But her church-going sprang from far other motives than to court attention; it was a hankering after peace of soul when surfeited with pleasure, and also a longing inspired by vanity to acquire for herself a place where her renunciation would be extolled, when her beauty should perish and her transient admirers vanish with it.

Driven from her post at Court through malicious reports, as well as her own imprudence, she was seized with the desire to flee far away from this world of slander and deceit. Tired of pleasure, whose hollowness she had proved, she began to crave for new fields of action, for a better, a more profitable life, for an ideal which religion was able to set before her.

She had no harrowing, morbid fears of sin and death, but trusted blindly in the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Life seemed to her now so pitiful, so miserable, so full of wretchedness, that the mere thought of renouncing the world brought her relief. Mother Church opened her arms and she would seek refuge in her bosom, not as an ascetic thirsting for mercy, but as a willing combatant who is ready to sacrifice pleasure, the amenities of life, all, for a great idea, and in reliance on Christ—that brave and loving soldier—find strength to dedicate her life to the poor, the sick, the desolate, and the oppressed.

It is recorded that when Eugénie entered the convent to take her holy vows, an aged, half-witted nun came towards her, stood still, and looked at her with an idiotic vacant expression, then suddenly exclaimed:

“My daughter! do not seek for rest within our walls, you are called to adorn a throne!”

In her state of religious ecstasy these words appear to have made a deep impression upon her. The exclamation of the nun seemed to her a voice from above, as though Providence had spoken to her, and the Countess Montijo was strengthened in her conviction that even the Church had dedicated her to a worldly life, and instead of allowing her daughter to bury herself in a convent, they left Spain for further travel. But the stirring life on which she was now entering, and the worldly greatness to which Eugénie believed herself called, only served to increase her ambition, her vanity, and her pride.

CHAPTER III.

TRAVELLING—THE FIRST MEETING OF EUGÉNIE AND NAPOLEON.

MY object in dwelling at some length in the beginning on Eugénie's mother is to be explained by the influence which most mothers exercise over their children ; and then, with equal reason, I thought it incumbent on me to devote some detail to her, as we shall find so many striking points of resemblance between the characters of mother and daughter.

The Countess of Montijo possessed a sensual nature, but was endowed with great intelligence ; she was intensely ambitious and inordinately vain. In her bigotry and fiery temper she was a true child of Spain, but her mental powers and clever calculations remind us, as we have already said, of her Scotch descent. She was a struggler through life, but one confident of success, one who attained her goal because she believed that she would not fail.

Eugénie was not less vain and not less ambi-

tious than her mother; she had inherited much of her beauty and cleverness, and in a critical moment could strike the balance as clearly as she could. She was not less bigoted and not less enthusiastic; but, above all, it was also her wish to work her way upwards—if needful, step by step. If she had been placed in the same position and actuated by the same circumstances as her mother, she would probably have acted much as she did.

Much as she did—but not quite! She had inherited her energy, she had imbibed her theories, and her head had certainly not been less filled with dreams of greatness; but her senses were more under control, for, in her pride—an inheritance from her father—she had a restraint upon her wayward heart, even in its insatiable craving after happiness.

From this father, the chivalrous Spanish officer, she had gained in a high degree both national and personal pride, which was nourished by the conviction that her race belonged to the great ones among a people who, in her eyes, were the bravest, the most splendid in the world. And from him too she inherited the courage which she had shown on so many occasions—courage which made her ride unsaddled horses in her

youth, which, as Empress, led her to visit cholera-smitten hospitals, which kept her firm at her post during the perils of war, and which finally, as a childless widow, has shown itself in the highest form of all—patience.

Although Eugénie was sent away from home in her childhood, it was hardly likely that she was ignorant of the fact that her parents were not living together on the best of terms. Whether she cast the blame on her mother, who certainly deserved it, or, swayed by the influence of their congenial life together, was inclined to believe that she had been unjustly treated, cannot be decided by any definite opinion. In the meantime we are certain that the Countess Montijo possessed her daughter's affection, and strong and tender as the bond was between the two women, it did not spring entirely from the warm and loving heart of Eugénie, nor from the admiration—we may call it enthusiasm—with which the Countess contemplated her favourite child, but from first to last from their perfect agreement and harmony.

Eugénie's residence at the Court of Isabella, and possibly still more her adventurous life of travel with her mother, put new weapons into the hands of her detractors, who again attacked

her on moral grounds. But it seems to be more credible that the reports circulated about this time had their origin solely in her desire to attract attention. And as we may confidently believe that as Empress she was faithful to her husband and her exalted position, as neither slanderers nor enviers have been able to show that she forgot her womanly dignity while she occupied the throne of France, we seem to have valid grounds for believing that in her youth too, she was better than report allowed.

But this by no means implies that she was a pattern of virtue. When slander attacked her there were reasons at hand, and many a woman's reputation has been blighted for far slighter extravagances of conduct than those which the young Countess committed.

Pleasure was her delight, and she was vain and proud of her loveliness; she courted attention and was not always careful by what means she attained it—after all, excusable foibles, but still, foibles that have been laid to her charge.

She and her mother led a very gay life, in bathing resorts during the summer and in capital cities during the winter. Everywhere Eugénie strove to rise higher in the social scale, and everywhere members of the most exclusive

aristocracy were among her admirers. By means of her beauty, her conspicuous costumes, and her relentless coquetry, it was easy for her to fetter men and to arouse hatred and jealousy in the hearts of women whom she rivalled.

She enjoyed these brilliant seasons, and it charmed and flattered her to be the object of admiration wherever she appeared. But although she wasted her time amid vain pleasures it is hardly likely that she ever forgot the object she deliberately had in view, to make a good match.

As a child little Eugénie was rarely to be seen without violets in her hair or fastened into her waistband. As the summer advanced, and they became rare under the glowing skies of Spain, a shepherd was employed to fetch them for her from the heights of the Sierra Nevada. When grown up she still clung to the flowers which she loved above all others, for a gipsy woman had foretold that her happiness would bloom with the violets (the emblem of the Bonaparte family).

It is reported that Eugénie met Louis Napoleon at a watering-place in her early youth, and that even then the Prince felt himself drawn to the Spanish Countess, who—still half a child

—came towards him with a wreath of violets on her hair. But it is far more certain that they met later on, during a residence in London (1847-48), shortly after the mother and daughter had left the Court and Madrid.

What more natural than that Napoleon and Eugénie should take to each other and awaken a mutual confidence? Both were of distinguished descent, passionately eager for renown, and possessed of kindred enthusiasm for great ideas, with the same persevering pursuit of the goal they had set themselves. They were rich in hope, but poor in reality; for courageous as they were, and immovable in their belief that the future had great possibilities in store, they were both but adventurers.

Louis Napoleon soon became attached to Eugénie, and it is said that he proposed to her about this time. But his future was clouded and uncertain; he was only a poor embarrassed prince, and was, moreover, leading a gay, wild life.

Although Eugénie requited his affection, she was prudent enough to relinquish her ambition of becoming a princess for the present, though she was sanguine in her belief that the ambitious dreams of her lover would be realised. and she

wished to reserve to herself that first place in his gratitude which was already hers in his devotion. The following farewell letter is said to have been written by her¹:—

“You wish to go to Paris. You long for the possession of power, to become Consul, President, possibly Dictator. Suppose you attain to the first of these, will that satisfy you? Will it appease your ambition? Will you not aspire still higher? Undoubtedly you will. But how burdensome a wife would be to you! If, as you wish, you become Emperor, the place for an Empress must be kept vacant. But if you are unfortunate in your plans, if events do not turn out according to your wishes, if France does not offer you what you expect from her, then come back—but only then—and I will give you your answer. Remember that my heart beats strong enough to make up to you for all sorrow, all disappointed hopes.”

Louis Napoleon hastened to Paris on the news of the February Revolution and the flight of Louis Philippe; but at the first general election in 1848 the people evinced no sympathy in his cause. It was not till the occasion of some by-election that the adherents of the Prince came forward as a party, and when once able to act they spared no pains to achieve success.

¹ Dr. MAX RING, *Die Napoleoniden und die Frauen*.

Bonapartist proclamations were displayed at every street corner in Paris, and in the course of a week there were as many as six organs of the press openly espousing his cause. The result proved the ground gained by the party in this short time, for the capital chose the Prince for their representative with 84,420 votes, and at the same time three departments had honoured him with similar confidence.

His election resulted in long and violent debates in the National Assembly, and his friends began to fear for his personal safety if he remained in Paris. On his return to London he sent a notice to the National Assembly, in which he stated that "the hostile manner which the executive power had adopted towards him made it his duty to refuse a distinction which was said to have been gained by intrigue."

This well-calculated reserve, in conjunction with a continuous, untiring zeal to secure constituents, greatly increased the feeling in his favour. At the fresh election which followed the June riots, the people a second time chose Louis Napoleon as member for Paris, and, after an exile of thirty years, he hastened to take his seat in the Assembly, by whom, a few

months later (December 20th) he was promoted to be President of the Republic.

Eugénie and her mother had left London about the same time as Napoleon. They spent the summer of 1849 at Spa, the winter following they were in Brussels, and even in Madrid; but wherever they appeared crowds of ardent admirers flocked round them.

And while the Prince was quickly and surely gaining the throne of France, Eugénie's thoughts, in spite of the excitement of travelling, were directed towards Paris. She watched the rising of Napoleon's star with intense attention, and shortly before the *coup d'état* she set out for the French capital.

CHAPTER IV.

LOUIS NAPOLEON'S PROPOSALS—HIS ENGAGEMENT TO EUGÉNIE AND SUBSEQUENT MARRIAGE.

LOUIS NAPOLEON had been proclaimed Emperor. About eight million Frenchmen had recorded their wish for the restoration of the dynasty, and December 1st, 1852, the Senate and the Legislative Assembly had done homage to him at St. Cloud.

The Prince assumed the title of Emperor on this occasion, although since the *coup d'état* (from the 2nd till the 5th December, 1851) he had virtually been sovereign ruler in the land. And when the Emperor made his entry into Paris amid the thunder of the cannon, the roar of the drums, and the shouting of the populace, he was simply putting his last touch to the work which, planned with unerring prudence, and carried through with reckless energy, has been stigmatised as a crime by his enemies, and applauded as a deed of valour by his friends.

While in the Palais Elysée, the Prince President had given numerous and brilliant banquets, presided over with tact and grace by his cousin Mathilde, the daughter of the ex-king of Westphalia; but the *fêtes* became still more sumptuous and luxurious when the Emperor took up his residence in the newly-restored Tuileries.

Fifteen or sixteen years previously, when Mathilde de Montfort was visiting at Arenenberg, where Queen Hortense resided, the talk had been of an engagement between her and Louis Napoleon. Hortense, who loved her niece with almost motherly tenderness, had looked favourably on the union, and the apparently perfectly suitable match was approved of in the Bonaparte family council. But the Prince's over-hasty attempt to obtain his Uncle's throne upset these arrangements, and Mathilde married in 1841 the millionaire Anatole Demidoff, from whom she was separated after a miserable, childless union of one year. She then took a villa in the neighbourhood of Paris, and employed her time with study and the fine arts. But no sooner was her cousin chosen President than he recalled her to the capital.

Her former lover had been living a wild, adventurous life since they last met, and the

ardent feelings which had drawn them together in Arenenberg had become a thing of the past, but they had been replaced by a quiet, firm friendship, and for the second time Napoleon thought of marrying Mathilde.

The union met with the warmest approval of the Bonapartes. But the Church forbade the fulfilment of their wishes, and would not cancel the marriage with Demidoff, so that the Prince President had to seek elsewhere for a wife.

He made enquiries, but without success, about a member of the Imperial House of Russia, and was refused by both a Spanish and Portuguese princess, for, attractive as it might have been to share the French throne, these royal daughters had no mind to trust their future to the hands of an adventurer. Some kind friends directed his attention to the poor but strikingly beautiful Carola of Vasa, grand-daughter of Gustavus IV. of Sweden, and the present Queen of Saxony. An emissary was sent to make the necessary advances, but the Princess, who disliked the portrait of Napoleon, rejected the proposed alliance with tears.

Enraged at these repeated refusals, Napoleon swore that he would marry the daughter of a reigning house, even if he fetched her, sword

in hand; but at the same time he was patient, and enquired in fresh quarters. He confidently hoped that a little princess of the House of Hohenzollern would be enraptured to receive such an offer, but even she declined to wed the powerful suitor.

Through his friend, Lord Malmesbury, he begged Queen Victoria to favour a union between himself and her cousin, Princess Mary of Cambridge; but, without actively opposing the plan, the Queen and the Prince Consort raised objections to it.

The negotiations were not finally concluded when the world (January 19th, 1853) was startled by the following notice in the semi-official Paris paper, *La Patrie*, which other journals received instructions to copy, without a word of either censure or approval:—

“It is reported that a happy event, calculated to strengthen His Majesty’s Government and to ensure the future of his dynasty, is shortly to take place. The Emperor is about to marry Mademoiselle de Montijo, Countess of Téba, and the official notification of the marriage will be brought before the Legislative Assembly on Saturday, January 22nd. The Countess belongs to one of the highest families in Spain, and is sister to the Duchess of Alba. She is endowed

with great intelligence and possessed of remarkable beauty and grace."

It is probable that Eugénie had journeyed to Paris for the sole reason of meeting Napoleon, and we may confidently affirm that on her arrival she was feverishly impatient to be near him.

Introduced by Baron Rothschild, and accompanied by his daughter the Italian Countess Napoleon Camerata,¹ she appeared in the Court circle for the first time at one of the Prince President's hunting parties in the autumn of 1852, at Compiègne. Her charming figure, and the skill with which she rode her fiery Andalusian, roused the lively admiration of those present, and certainly in such a moment she was capable of turning the head of the most indifferent of men.²

¹ Count Camerata, the sole descendant of Elisa Bacciocchi, sister of Napoleon I., had followed Eugénie like a shadow during her travels; he was said by scandal-mongers to be her lover, and he was undoubtedly her ardent admirer. The young Count, who was strikingly like his great-uncle, killed himself in Paris immediately after the announcement of Napoleon's intended marriage with Eugénie.

² "The lovely Spaniard," we read in an account of the meet, "wore an elegant habit, and rode a thoroughbred Andalusian, given to her by Baron Rothschild. Her dainty figure was well defined by a closely-buttoned habit; the skirt was long and wide, over grey trousers. With one of her tiny gloved hands she held the reins, while she used the other to urge on her excited horse by the help of a little riding-whip, the handle of which was set with real pearls. She wore patent leather boots, with

As Napoleon and his suite rode up to the spot, where she was respectfully waiting to greet him, he was captivated by her uncommon charm. At the same time he recalled their former meetings, recollections of his youth were aroused and passed in rapid succession before his inner gaze.

It was only under compulsion that he left her side during the hunt, and when the festivities at Compiègne came to an end, the Countess and her mother were accredited guests at Fontainebleau, the Elysée, and the Tuileries.¹

The flattering attention accorded her by the Emperor was immediately observed and commented upon; but in the meantime none but high heels and spurs. She sat her horse like a knight, and despised the saddle ordinarily used by ladies. Her long plaits were arranged under a dainty felt hat, from which waved a magnificent long ostrich feather fastened by a diamond clasp. Her sparkling eyes shone like lightning, and the bewitching smile that played round her rosy lips displayed the whiteness of her teeth."

¹ During the first visit to Compiègne Eugénie had won an emerald brooch, in the shape of a clover leaf, in a lottery which Napoleon had arranged, and she looked upon this as a pledge of future happiness. No matter what she was wearing, as long as the Emperor lived, this little brooch was placed among her diamonds. On becoming a widow she discarded all ornaments, but with the superstition of a Spaniard, she took to them again on the day that the Prince Imperial embarked for Zululand. After her son's death she left off her "talisman" for ever, and has recently given the treasured relic to her niece and friend, the Duchesse de Mouchy.

Eugénie herself understood how deep was the impression she had made.

The point was now to make the best use of her opportunities. She strove to be near him on every occasion, to give the most picturesque setting to her beauty, and to invent the most ravishing toilettes for each *fête*.

She was so thoroughly different from the women with whom Napoleon had been recently associated, that she speedily regained her place in his amorous dreams. He had no eyes for another, and there was an energy in his passion which was so opposed to his usual prudent control as to awaken the deepest astonishment among his followers, not one of whom would believe even now that this infatuation would lead to marriage.

Even he himself did not think so at first.¹ In earlier days, during his poverty and exile, he had always considered it preposterous that he should seek a wife outside the royal circle. Under these

¹ Many have tried to show that when Napoleon met Eugénie in Paris he instantly resolved to raise her to the throne. But the fact that immediately before his marriage he was still trying for a princess contradicts this statement most emphatically. Even when Madame Carette, who, moreover, was not attached to the Court till many years subsequently, tries to make it appear in her *Mémoires* that Napoleon and Eugénie were tacitly engaged for many months prior to his gaining the Imperial throne, it may have arisen from a misrepresentation of the above-named meeting between the Prince and the Countess in London, or we must look upon it merely as the amiable fancy of a devoted friend.

changed circumstances, while still proposing to princesses, he made Eugénie understand that he would esteem it a happiness to be her lover.

But Eugénie was no longer the naïve girl of sixteen, who had been romantically in love with an Alba, and who would have shrunk from no sacrifice to prove her devotion to him. Her feelings for Louis Napoleon were perhaps not less sincere, but she was in no mood to yield a jot without the chance of winning the whole.

In his pride and grandeur, Napoleon was, to her, the very ideal of manly strength and courage. He, through whose sole guidance the great change in the State had been accomplished, who by his decision and promptness of action had made himself absolute ruler in France, was in her eyes both a shining light and an exceptional hero. And yet the ardent Andalusian was as cold as a statue on this occasion, for the experience of years had taught her, among many other things, that a decided refusal to such an offer is the surest means of rousing the passions of a man.

The Emperor in the meantime was not to be easily daunted. He sent a confidential friend, Fialin de Persigny, to the Countess Montijo, not to solicit the hand of Eugénie, but to represent

to this experienced woman of the world that her daughter could never aspire to be Empress. He intimated through his friend, that considerations of State would not permit him to place the crown on the head of the woman he loved, though he hinted that perhaps in time he would be able to act with more freedom.

But the Countess was fully aware what course to follow in order to gain her end. In perfect harmony with her daughter's conduct, she curtly and coolly dismissed the emissary of the Emperor. Persuasion was then used, but with a like fruitless result, and Eugénie finally sent her respectful compliments to Napoleon with the message, "that not a shadow of suspicion must rest upon the wife of a Cæsar."

Irritated as he was by this denial, the passion of the Emperor at last became irresistible, and his repeated rejection by princesses gave him a welcome excuse to resolve on marrying Eugénie.

His relations and best friends opposed the union, and his aged Uncle, the ex-King Jerome, did all in his power to induce him to forget her. His private secretary and confidential friend, Moquart, persistently entreated him to overcome his feelings towards her; and it is said that Princess Mathilde besought him on her knees to

abstain from the unsuitable match. All were unanimous in imploring him, in default of a princess, to marry a French lady with a good old name, endeared to the people.

In order to divert his attention from the Spaniard, and at the same time to offer some compensation for his rejection by king's daughters, a union was suggested with the Polish Princess Czartoryska. But Eugénie reigned supreme in every thought, and, far from deterring him, the opposition of his friends seemed only to increase the ardour of his passion for her.

In order to put an end to the doubts that were harassing him he enquired of an intelligent lady attached to the Court, which of the two he should choose, Princess Czartoryska or Mademoiselle Montijo. She wittily replied to his question in favour of the latter, as she said—

“Sire, if the choice is left to me, I prefer the Cachucha to the Mazurka.”

Napoleon looked upon this reply as a call from fate. There was a gathering at the Tuileries on the evening of New Year's Day, 1852, when Eugénie, who was among the guests as usual, was passing through the hall leaning on the arm of a Colonel. The Spanish Countess and her

cavalier stepped in front of the wife of an officer of high rank, and placed themselves before her. The lady became very irate, and expressed her displeasure in loud slighting terms about Mademoiselle Montijo, whose Spanish blood became roused. She hastened to the Emperor and declared that she would no longer remain a guest at a Court where she was insulted.

"I will avenge you," answered the Emperor, and took the first opportunity of seeking out the Countess Montijo to beg for the hand of her daughter; and it goes without saying that he was received with open arms by both mother and daughter.

The news of this engagement created intense surprise, but gave no satisfaction. The Bourse, that political barometer, fell almost to "stormy," while the members of the Emperor's family and his most trusted friends went about with gloomy looks; it was opposed in the Ministerial Council, and outside, among the commonalty, the proposed union produced an unfavourable impression.

The following lines taken from a correspondent of the *Indépendance Belge* may with all the greater certainty be characterised as an echo of public opinion in Paris, as contemporary

correspondents of other papers expressed themselves in the same strain.

“It is not the kind of marriage,” he says, “which those who share the views of the Emperor and his servants or personal friends have wished. A diplomatic union might have had political reasons, and have been of some utility to the State; a union with a French lady would have been gratifying to the people. By such a marriage the Emperor would either have entered the family of a sovereign with dignity and splendour, or, as it were by an appeal to the nation, he would a second time have solemnly ratified his connection with the people. On the other hand, a marriage with a Spanish lady meets with no sympathy in the nation, and can only be the result of personal gratification. But the head of a great State like France, who is anxious to found a new dynasty, ought to entertain more serious thoughts and higher aims than to satisfy a whim and succumb to a young woman’s beauty.”

Only three persons were thoroughly pleased—Eugénie, her mother, and the Emperor.

“She has intellect for two and courage for three,” observed Napoleon of his fiancée; and when he met the Council of State, the Senate, and the Legislative Assembly a few days after the papers had published the event, he said:—

“In announcing to you my approaching marriage I am obeying the will of the people, which has been so frequently revealed to me. The alliance I have in view is not in accordance with old political traditions, and that I consider to be an advantage, for the instances of the past have but aroused superstition in the minds of the populace. They have not forgotten that in the course of the last seventy years princesses have ascended the throne to see their race exiled and dispersed by war or revolution. But one single woman appears to have brought happiness, and to live in a higher degree than any other in the recollection of the nation. This lady, General Bonaparte’s modest and amiable wife, had no royal blood in her veins. When a man has been raised before the eyes of all Europe, and by the power of a new principle, to the level of ancient dynasties, he ought not to seek admission into their circle in order to add age to his own escutcheon, or for the sake of forcibly intruding into a royal family. It is far better for him to be mindful of his descent, to preserve his own individual character, and in the face of Europe frankly and openly to avenge his position of parvenu, an honourable title when it has been bestowed upon him by the unanimous voice of a great and free people.

“My marriage is a private matter. It only remains to me to speak of my choice. The lady whom I have selected is of illustrious descent. In feeling, education, and remembrance of the blood which her father has shed

in the Imperial cause, she is French. As a Spaniard by birth, there is the advantage that she is free from relations in France to whom it might have been necessary to assign posts of honour. Endowed as she is with the choicest qualities of heart and mind, she will be an ornament to the throne, and its strongest support in the hour of danger. A pious Roman Catholic like myself, she will offer fervent prayers for the welfare of France. Gracious and good—of this I am certain—she will recall the virtues of the Empress Josephine. I have therefore come to say to all France that I have preferred to choose a consort whom I love and esteem rather than a stranger through whom I might possibly have had advantages, but such as might have demanded sacrifices on my part. Without slighting anybody, I am following my own inclinations, after careful and prudent reflection. And while I prefer independence, good qualities, and family happiness to the possible advantage of the dynasty and ambitious calculations, I shall not be the less powerful because I am more my own master.

“I am going at once to Notre Dame to introduce the future Empress to the people and the army. The confidence which they have shown in me will certainly be extended in all its fulness to her whom I have chosen. And you, gentlemen, when you have made her acquaintance, will, I am confident, be assured that in this step also I have been inspired by Providence.”

Eugénie's most ambitious dream was realised, and she was now to emerge from an adventurous twilight into the dazzling blaze of royal splendour. Providence had selected her to take this place, and she bowed with humble gratitude to God's will.

The week that intervened between the engagement and the Imperial marriage passed in a whirl of delight. She was greeted on all sides with marked distinction, courtiers approached her with assurances of lowly devotion, and crowds bent the knee before her. Those who did not admire her were silent. Napoleon's nearest connections, who were really furious at the union, bowed before the future Empress, hungry for crumbs of favour. Princes and dukes holding posts of honour, and the proudest names in France did homage to her, and she felt herself the centre of universal attention and jealousy.

The civil marriage took place in the evening of January 29th, 1853, in comparative privacy.¹ But

¹ Accompanied by her mother, the Spanish Ambassador, her suite, and the Emperor's Master of the Ceremonies, Eugénie drove at half-past eight to the Tuileries, where Prince Napoleon and Princess Mathilde were waiting to conduct her to the Emperor. He was standing dressed in a general's uniform, with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, and surrounded by the remaining princes and princesses, the Archbishop of Paris, three cardinals, ministers, marshals, admirals, and the whole Court

the splendour displayed at the wedding ceremony in church exceeded anything that had been witnessed in France since the days of Napoleon the Great.

From early morning the National Guard and the troops were standing in double rows from the Tuileries to Notre Dame, and the whole population of Paris was on foot to get at least one little glimpse of what was going on, while trains brought over 200,000 spectators from the provinces to the capital. The brilliant aspect of the streets was enhanced by the gay costumes of the ladies, the lavish display of flags, the initials of Napoleon and Eugénie to be seen at every turn, and the gold-embroidered uniforms of the military that glittered in the sun. For

staff. Eugénie wore a white satin gown trimmed with lace, with two rows of costly pearls round her neck, and flowers in her hair. The Emperor advanced to meet his bride, gave her his hand, and led her, accompanied by those present, to the Salle des Maréchaux, where about a thousand people were assembled, who had been invited to witness the ceremony.

The bride and bridegroom sat down while all the others remained standing. After the marriage contract had been signed by the Emperor and his wife, by her mother, the princes and princesses, the cardinals, the marshals, and the Emperor's witnesses, they all adjourned to the theatre of the palace, where a cantata was performed for which Auber had composed the music. The Emperor retired to his apartments at eleven o'clock, when Eugénie and the Countess Montijo, accompanied by the Master of the Ceremonies, drove back to the Elysée, where the ladies had been living during the engagement.

although it was the middle of winter, the sky was blue and clear, and the air as mild as on a spring day.

At half-past eleven the future Empress drove from the Elysée to the Tuileries. Her mother was seated on her left hand, and opposite to her was the Master of the Ceremonies, Count Tascher de la Pagerie. The bride's personal charm was enhanced by her elegance and tasteful dress. She wore a white velvet gown, with a long train, covered with costly lace of a violet design, presented to her by the town of Liège.¹ Round her waist was a belt of diamonds, and she had the same coronet of brilliants that Marie Louise had worn on her wedding day, to which was fastened a long lace veil and wreath of orange blossoms.

As she drove in by the great gates of the Tuileries, Prince Napoleon and Princess Mathilde were to be seen waiting at the foot of the steps to receive their new sovereign, while the drums beat and the troops presented arms.

¹ In 1888 Eugénie sent this lace, which was worth at least 30,000 francs, as a wedding present to her connection, Letizia Bonaparte, Duchess of Aosta, and with it was a note in which the ex-Empress explained that she had worn it in the happiest and proudest hour of her life. She added that she had hoped to give it to her son's bride, but Providence had willed it otherwise.

All the church bells of this capital of the world pealed forth on the stroke of twelve, and from the Hotel des Invalides 101 guns re-echoed all over the city as the future Empress walked through the festive halls of the Tuileries. Accompanied by King Jerome, his ministers, marshals, and admirals, Napoleon advanced to meet his bride, when he took her hand and led her to the balcony, where they were enthusiastically welcomed by the assembled multitude.

Meanwhile the Court equipages had driven up, and the bridal procession began to form. It was headed by a mounted band, followed by the General's staff of National Guards, with a detachment on horseback, "*Les Lanciers de l'Impératrice*," etc.

After the band and the troops came the suite of the Empress and that of the Princess Mathilde in open carriages, the officers of the Imperial household, and the Secretary of State. These were followed by three coaches, each drawn by six horses. In the first were the Grand Maréchal de la Cour, the Lord Chamberlain, the Chief Master of the Ceremonies, and the bride's lady of honour; in the second sat the Princess Mathilde and the Countess Montijo; the third—the same which had been used at the baptism

of the King of Rome in 1811—was occupied by the ex-King of Westphalia and his son, Prince Napoleon.

There is an empty space for one minute, and then a detachment of cavalry in gala uniforms issues from the great gates of the Tuileries, and the Imperial carriage is in sight, drawn by eight magnificent horses. It is the gilt coach, with the large Imperial crown, that on December 2nd, 1804, took Napoleon I. and the Empress Josephine to their coronation in Notre Dame, and which was used a few years later for the marriage of the great Emperor to his second wife. It is built of glass, so that the crowd may clearly see the occupants, and surmounted by five gilt eagles with outspread wings.

As Napoleon and Eugénie are driving through the palace gates, the Imperial crown outside the coach gives way and falls to the ground. The horses are stopped, and the crown is replaced as rapidly as possible. But an old servant under the First Empire tells the standers-by that the same accident took place with the same coach and the same Imperial crown when Marie Louise of Austria and the great Napoleon were on their way to the Cathedral to be married.

The bridal procession advances, and besides the troops who, as we have said, line the route, are to be seen groups of citizens and artisans, veterans from the time of Napoleon I., and young girls in white, all in readiness to greet the sovereigns as they drive through the Rue de Rivoli, which is just finished, and looks bright with its enthusiastic crowds. The ladies wave their handkerchiefs and throw flowers before the coach, while the soldiers present arms.

An enormous vestibule has been erected outside the Cathedral, covered with paintings of saints of former kings and queens, and as the Imperial couple pass through it into Notre Dame, which is lighted by 20,000 wax tapers, the drums reverberate, the bells of every church in Paris are set in motion, and the organ peals forth. The assembled congregation rises *en masse*, while the Archbishop, carrying a crucifix, advances to meet their Majesties. The Emperor takes Eugénie by the hand, and as she crosses the threshold of the old Cathedral in which so many generations have bent the knee, the young Empress is overcome with violent emotion, which infects those near her. Anxious, distrustful of herself, and apparently amazed at her own triumph, she looks nervously at the vast multitude around her.

A platform has been raised at the far end of the Cathedral which is occupied by an orchestra of five hundred men, and as the bridal procession advances, the more numerous and magnificent are the floral decorations, the gilding, and the tapers. The large windows are covered with curtains embroidered with golden bees, while rich silk velvet hangings with the initials of the Imperial pair drape every gallery.

Two thrones are placed in the nave, and the canopy of crimson velvet, bordered with ermine, is supported by an immense gilt eagle. The transepts, which are set apart for the high officials of the Empire, are decorated with symbolical paintings, and flags, bearing the names of the most famous cities of France, float down from the roof.

The Court officials are on one side, the ministers and deputies on the other, while the Imperial couple occupy the seats under the canopy, surrounded by princes, princesses, gentlemen, and ladies.

The ceremony, performed by the Archbishop of Paris, begins about one o'clock; and the Archbishop of Versailles spreads a silver bridal veil over their Majesties as they kneel. The Empress becomes more and more agitated, and the Master

of the Ceremonies, who stands behind her the whole time, is afraid again and again that she will faint, as he hears the Emperor encourage her with reassuring words. At last the service is over, the Empress recovers her composure, and while the *Te Deum* is being chanted, Abbé Legran presents her with the document recording the marriage. Then Eugénie, wearing her Imperial crown, adorned with diamonds and covered with priceless lace, leaves the Cathedral on the arm of the Emperor and accompanied by the Archbishop, with his entire staff of clergy. She has reached the goal, and the world is at her feet; but it is not the radiant feeling of satisfied ambition which occupies her now; she is simply conscious of the heavy responsibility resting upon her shoulders.

In the midst of the magnificence and festivity, the jubilation of the crowd, the brilliancy with which she is surrounded, we are told that a presentiment of her coming fall was already overshadowing her.¹

Is it a consequence of recent agitating impressions? Is her overwrought nervous system to blame? But as she drives from the Cathedral she

¹ IMBERT DE SAINT AMAND, *Les Femmes des Tuileries*.

seems to see the countenance of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette among the crowd. Whichever way she turns it is apparent, and an anxious feeling comes over her, that all this splendour and magnificence will prove but a burden too heavy for her to bear.

CHAPTER V.

EUGÉNIE'S APPEARANCE — HER GOODNESS AND INTELLIGENCE — ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE AT FIRST.

THE *Moniteur* of the day following the Imperial marriage gave an enthusiastic description of the magnificent ceremony, concluding with the following words:—

“The zeal displayed by the crowd to catch a glimpse of their new sovereign was prompted by something more than mere curiosity, and the universal applause that greeted her was genuine. Her noble and lovely countenance, the beauty of which is enhanced by modesty and gentleness, irresistibly attracted each individual. The working classes felt that the Empress looked on one and all with kindness and goodwill.”

In spite of the prejudice of the people mentioned in a previous chapter, who did not cordially accept the Emperor's choice, and although there were a few discontented and silent voices among

the crowds who cheered Napoleon and Eugénie, the verdict of the *Moniteur* was not unfounded.

The Empress was so lovely, her whole person and every movement were so attractive and at the same time so full of dignity, that opposition was silenced under the influence of her bewitching beauty. Everyone has seen the portrait of Eugénie, and many possess it; for not in France only, even in other lands, people hastened to purchase it, in order to adorn a newly-acquired album—one of the family treasures which she introduced. The modest little albums, which were acceptable in those days, are now in shreds or relegated to the dusty shelves of some lumber-room, as fashion has gradually replaced them by larger and grander photograph books, frames, stands, and other knick-knacks.

The likenesses of Eugénie in her youth have faded, and when at rare intervals we see her portrait it is that of a white-haired woman, bearing the mark of sorrow in every feature. But at this moment one of her early likenesses is before me. Let us stop and look at it for a moment:—

An attractive, winning face, with regular, rather marked features, the oval form of which recalls

the portraits of Mary Queen of Scots.¹ The nose is arched and somewhat large, the mouth beautifully formed, showing energy of character, while between the slightly parted lips the teeth shine in brilliant whiteness. The skin is fair, and the hair bright, with a warm golden tinge. The lids droop heavily over the dark blue eyes, which look black from beneath the long lashes; and they are in striking contrast with the hair and complexion, and shine with that limpid brilliancy peculiar to women of the Latin races. The expression is open and benignant, while deep feeling, clear judgment, a lively imagination, and, above all, a pure mind, are evident. The eyebrows are so delicately defined that anyone who has not seen the Empress would be tempted to say she has been flattered. The women of Andalusia are noted for their beautiful hands and feet, and Eugénie does not belie her descent: her tiny white, well-formed hands seem made to rest upon the purple of a throne. The form of her head and the bend of her neck in perfect beauty remind one of some antique work of art. In short, there is not a flaw in this lovely appear-

¹ It has been asserted that the Kirkpatricks are the illegitimate descendants of James II. If this is correct, the likeness to the beautiful Queen is easily accounted for.

ance, and no harsh colouring disturbs the truthful harmony of the picture.

From the moment she was made Empress, Eugénie burned with the desire to secure the goodwill of the people, after receiving the adulation of those in closer contact and reducing to silence all those who resented her descent, or blamed her former adventurous life. Violent and passionate, but well under control, if needful; proud and ambitious, but apparently modest, almost humble; singularly courageous, and yet prudent in her calculations, she did all in her power to add to the importance of her position. She possessed two of the qualities which essentially adorn a ruler: a large heart and an ever open hand. She has laid the foundation-stone of more than one benevolent institution, which will command respect for her name when she has long been forgotten by private individuals.

Before her marriage, the organs of the Government had taken pains to bring proofs of her kindness of heart before the notice of the nation. One day the *Moniteur* described how, during a drive, she had seen a workman fall from a scaffold, and had immediately left her carriage to hasten to him and have him conveyed

to the hospital. Another time a second paper told how the Emperor's fiancée had seen a poor forsaken child, taken it into her own carriage, and promised to care for it. Yet a third reported the visit of Eugénie to the convent of the Sacré Cœur, where she had spent one happy year of her childhood. It is said that she wished to see everything; the schoolroom, the parloir, the dormitories, but especially the chapel where she had offered her childish prayers to God.

It is further stated that she recognised one old nun who performed the most lowly offices in the convent, and that she rushed up to her, kissing and embracing her fervently.

A striking proof of her kindliness of heart was given when she refused to accept a diamond necklace worth 600,000 francs, which the Municipal Council of Paris intended to present to her. In a singularly amiable letter she thanked the Council for their magnificent intention, but insisted that she should regret the serious expense that would be caused to the city on her account, and that the marriage of the Emperor should impose such a heavy burden upon the country generally. She added that her sole wish was to share the love of the people for their Emperor,

while she expressed her earnest desire that the 600,000 francs might be devoted to some benevolent purpose.

An act of such genuine unselfishness could not fail to make a favourable impression, especially as it was followed up by countless others after her marriage. No petitioner ever approached the Empress without meeting with speedy assistance, given from no other motive but the urgency of the case. She originated and promoted benevolent undertakings without caring to place herself in a prominent position at their head.¹ Then the large sums which she so quietly gave

¹ It would prove too long a task to name all the charities presided over by the Empress, though notice of a few of them ought to find a place here.

During a stay in Dieppe (1853) the Empress presented 40,000 francs to a community of Sisters of Charity in the town, 15,000 francs to an institution for old and infirm sailors and their families, as well as considerable sums for the building of schools. In 1854 the "Sainte Eugénie" Hospital for children was erected; and in the same year the Emperor and Empress gave 600,000 francs towards a home for needy workmen. In 1857 the Imperial Home for Convalescents, of which the Empress was the originator, and to which the Emperor contributed 2,000,000 francs, was opened in Vincennes, and received about 58,000 men in the course of ten years. A similar home for women was opened in Vesinet, which took in 27,000 patients during the same period. In the same year, also under the direction of the Empress, the large hospital for scrofulous children was opened at Berck-sur-Mer (not far from the little town of Vernon), which is still considered the best seaside hospital in Europe, and has served as a model for similar institutions in several countries. Other hospitals were erected by the sea (1859) in Falaise and (1861) in Epinal, and largely endowed

to others were distributed with loving thoughts and accompanied by many a comforting word. And in order that the poor should not be left helpless in the event of her death, she even insured her life in their favour in 1863.

Those who had begun by admiring her for her beauty soon learnt to love her for her goodness. She knew how to give, but she could also attract and captivate by countless other means. The Emperor's devotion had raised her to the throne; but it was her own tact and genial bearing that maintained her position. With the innate dignity of a queen, with beauty that could

by the Empress. During the war in Italy Eugénie opened a subscription for the women and children of fallen soldiers, which brought in over 5,000,000 francs, and the distribution of which the Empress personally superintended. In 1859 a sudden impetus was given to the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and the Empress again became practically interested in the cause. An Imperial decree of 1862 placed all homes and asylums for children under the protection of Eugénie, who liberally contributed to each one. During the summer of 1866, while the Court was at St. Cloud, a beneficent society was founded for disabled workmen. In 1867 public kitchens were opened in Paris, and maintained from the Imperial privy purse. The Empress showed great interest in an old-established lying-in hospital for needy women, which had been supported by Marie Antoinette, and became its president.

Finally, it deserves to be remembered that she caused several new hospitals to be erected, and older ones to be enlarged and improved, according to her directions; that she promoted the scheme for providing nursing and medicine gratis to the poor of Paris; that cheap baths and burial clubs, together with a public distribution of alms, were all organised under the supervision of the Empress, etc., etc.

change a democrat into an adherent of Imperial power, she was as equal to her task as any princess born to rule. When adorned with the Crown diamonds and seated under the canopy of the throne in order to receive the magnates of France and foreign diplomatists, she performed her task with a graceful dignity that many a sovereign of ancient regal descent might well have envied her. There was hardly a prettier sight than Eugénie on horseback by the Emperor's side on grand parade; and when she appeared in the Imperial carriage and bent her well-formed head in greeting, the masses were dazzled, and one felt instinctively that she was a woman who would understand how to maintain her position.

But, charming as she was at a distance and attractive to the multitude, Eugénie was, if possible, still more entrancing in her *inner* circle. She was not merely a sovereign who permitted herself to be approached, but one of those women whose amiability and excellence become more apparent on a closer acquaintance. Friendly and gracious towards all, but irresistible when she laid herself out to conquer, and nearly always eager to captivate, she possessed a marvellous power for drawing all hearts towards

her. She united the charm of a winning cheerfulness and a refinement of feeling that carried even greater weight than her beauty, with that cordial goodwill which Frenchmen so truly call *politesse du cœur*. She understood to perfection the art of using her gifts, and possessing as she did an inexhaustible, sparkling, and witty flow of conversation, she was always fortunate in saying the right thing in the right way.

It is rare to meet with two people more suited to each other than Napoleon and Eugénie, and still more rare to find a love-match more in harmony with the dictates of prudence. They had met and loved each other in youth, and she had believed in his star when many smiled at the "dreamer"; and when suddenly made Empress, with all the power and responsibility of a sovereign, she never forgot that it was he who had given her the position, and that her authority was born of his. Her triumphs and the splendour that surrounded her were his gifts, and in proportion to the realisation of her own dignity grew her love and admiration for him who, in the eyes of the world, had lost caste by his choice of a bride. It was therefore her constant aim to prove to the world that the "adventuress," as

she was called, could serve the cause of the dynasty better than one born at the foot of a throne.

Eugénie loved all that is beautiful, chivalrous, and heroic, and especially uncommon. She used to say of herself, "I am of the same race as the Cid and Don Quixote."

"I would rather be evil spoken of than not named at all, and I am determined that the public shall busy themselves about me," had been the exclamation of Louis Napoleon, when his plans to overturn the existing government had simply evoked compassion and ridicule. Even then he had gauged the French character, and knew well that vanity was the nation's weakest point, to flatter which was one of the surest means of maintaining his power. And although in his private life he preferred almost bourgeois simplicity, no effort was too great, no ceremony too striking or theatrical, when he appeared as Emperor, and his wife was an adept in arranging the brilliant drama which he felt impelled to carry out.

Since her young days, when she had risen from a bed of sickness to be a friend of the toreador and the reckless rider of the Corso, her whole life had been one longing to play some

conspicuous part. She was perhaps hardly conscious of the fact, for wherever she appeared her beauty inspired universal homage, which became at last not only a habit, but a necessity to her. Just as an actress longs for applause and thirsts after the approbation of the public, Eugénie craved for the certainty that the world was looking on, while she longed to hear the cheers of the multitude.

Again, as an actress after each new piece scans the columns of the papers to read the judgment of the press, and to rejoice in each favourable criticism, Eugénie became absorbed after every *fête*, every review, every little journey, in the descriptions published about her appearance and her costume. She rejoiced in the praise bestowed upon her, and felt incited to yet greater efforts to win and retain the favour of the people.

Everyone knows that she studied dress with such zeal, seriousness, and importance as made fashion a divinity, of which she herself was the high-priestess. But it may be less generally known that the separate styles for those splendid costumes which distinguished the dynasty were often thought out by Eugénie, and the selection of the guests who were to be invited to the Imperial soirées was made under her personal

supervision. It thus frequently happened that ladies of high standing, who had been invited to the Tuileries, were dismissed if their gowns were displeasing to Her Majesty.

No nation can compete with the French in politeness; but the Spaniard has a warmer, more respectful deference, which recalls a past age and is full of charm. Brought up as she was in the Spanish *grandezza*, but at the same time fully at her ease with the lighter manners of the French, it was a satisfaction to Eugénie to impress on her Court circle her own native stamp of grace and refinement. Her taste and power of invention were imitated throughout the land, and she developed elegance and luxury which the higher circles felt constrained to follow. She was soon recognised as sovereign, not in France only, but everywhere, and that which was accepted as *comme il faut* in Paris was copied over half the globe.

The Empress had barely occupied the throne a month before countless stories were told of her benevolence, her goodness, her grace, or her intelligence; before the newspapers had published detailed and enthusiastic reports of her appearance, her demeanour, her words and actions; or before the attention of the public had been

attracted to her in such a degree as almost to cause forgetfulness of any criticism upon the measures and policy of the Emperor.

Wherever the Imperial pair was to be seen the curious multitude was at hand, and although expressions of disapproval were audible here and there, the vulgar were dazzled by splendour, the like of which no city in our century has been able to produce. There is no doubt there was more illusion than reality in the enthusiasm born of this magnificence, but then Eugénie and Napoleon stirred up the recollections of a former time—recollections of that first glorious Empire which caused the hearts of the Parisians to beat with feverish fervour.

CHAPTER VI.

IMPERIAL VISIT TO ENGLAND—RETURN VISIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

WHATEVER the judgment accorded to the young Empress in foreign lands, the opinion soon became universal that she understood better than any one of her predecessors the art of attracting the fickle Parisians to her triumphal car.

And she was resolved that not only France, but the whole of Europe, should do her homage; that princesses who had turned up their noses at the *parvenu*, and princes who had scornfully smiled at the mention of Mademoiselle Montijo, should bow to the ground where they had formerly jeered. It cut her to the heart that she was not of royal birth, and she was jealous of the daughters of kings who enjoyed all the glory of inherited dignity. She loved heirdom all the more passionately and persistently because it was just the one thing that she could never obtain.

As the daughter of a commoner, on her marriage, is admitted into the circle of the nobility, and possibly gains the admiration of all by her beauty, her good breeding, and tact, and thus may put the daughter of a nobleman into the shade, so had Eugénie been raised by her charm and refinement to take rank among the leading sovereigns of Europe.

But just as the commoner's daughter will undoubtedly meet with something that she either cannot understand or is wholly unable to make her own, so Eugénie felt that there was something wanting, because her antecedents had been so thoroughly different from those of other sovereigns.

The daughter of a simple citizen has not trod the ground that her race has owned for centuries, and the memory of her ancestors has not accompanied her step by step through life. The Empress of the French was not born in the purple, and the impressions of her childhood were totally different from those of her present position.

The very least, most unimportant princesses possess what she had not, and their exalted birth seemed to her of inestimable value. She forgot that the forefathers of whom they were so proud

had often purchased their greatness by dishonourable means, by the tears of the people or the blood of the innocent; she forgot that the time was past when kings were looked up to as demi-gods, when monarchs could be guilty of the worst excesses and yet be revered by their people; she forgot that what is now looked for in a ruler, what is admired and loved in him, is an unblemished life, with high and noble thoughts towards his fellows.

She remembered but one point: *they* possessed what she had never had; and good, intelligent, lovely as Eugénie was, she would willingly, if it had been possible, have exchanged her strong intellect for their stupidity, her irresistible beauty for their mediocrity, her boundless warmth of heart for their narrow views of life, simply to be able to claim the rights of inheritance.

But as this could never be, as her former life must always pursue her, and her birth be brought forward as a weapon against her, it became all the more her burning wish to see the members of old ruling houses as guests in her palace, and for ever so short a time to make them forget her descent—a sorry substitute for equality!

But the fulfilment of this wish was no easy matter. The reigning sovereigns at first refrained from visiting Paris; and, in spite of repeated, persistent attempts, she could not even induce the old nobility of France to come to the palace.

She did not understand the Legitimists, and could not grasp that their unshaken attachment to *le Roi* was an item in their inheritance, the outcome of their best convictions, and that tender memories were connected with the ancient royal race. But she admired their loyalty, while taking the most incredible steps to entice duchesses and marchionesses from the Faubourg St. Germain to her newly-formed Court.

But such as these were far too proud to bow the knee before a Spaniard, though in the reign of the Bourbons they had ardently and willingly kissed the foot of the throne. But Eugénie, the subject of a side branch of the Bourbons, who had acquired for herself a place on the throne of their kings, was made to feel that every effort to approach them would be repulsed with coldness and scorn.

In comparison with the heavy blows that were to assail her in her later life, these

humiliations were *nothing*; but in view of her vanity and the position she was then occupying, they were bitter enough, and the coldness of the Legitimist nobility, in the very zenith of her power, was one of the sharpest thorns that pierced her Imperial crown.

But although it continued impossible to persuade the old nobles to set foot within the walls where the Spaniard reigned as hostess, the future clearly showed that Eugénie was equal to overcoming all obstacles in the way of forcing the respect of all the royal families of Europe.

The Crimean war (1854-56) furthered her end in the most unexpected manner. The victories won by the French had raised the country to its old position as the most prominent military power in Europe, and the importance of Napoleon III. rose in proportion. England, whose interests had been so materially furthered by the war, was the first to sing the praises of the new Emperor, and her Queen at last felt herself justified in inviting the usurper and his consort to visit the venerable castle of Windsor.

It had long been the ardent desire of Eugénie to enter into personal relationship with the

Queen of England, and this invitation was in more than one respect a source of intense satisfaction to her.

She, who had once been a subordinate in a Court whose Queen was noted for her disreputable mode of life, entertained the highest respect for the sovereign of England, whose reputation as a loyal wife and devoted mother was universal; she whose greatness was mainly founded on outward appearances, on extravagance, and the glitter of her Court, was simply amazed, though at the same time attracted, by the easy, home-like tone that prevailed in the neighbouring island.

Victoria had hitherto ignored the Empress with marked pointedness, and the English newspapers had not only shown themselves incredulous respecting the embellished accounts which the French organs had published about her descent at the time of her marriage, but had unreservedly criticised her early life.

It was, therefore, not only delightful to show herself in England, but also of essential importance to her to make the best possible impression. For, she argued, if she could gain the favour of this Court, her past life would be the more easily forgotten, and her position

become assured among other sovereigns. Full of anxiety as to the manner in which she was likely to be received, she induced Napoleon to send one of his ministers in advance. He went officially to negotiate conditions of peace with the Powers, but at the same time with the commission to arrange all points of etiquette connected with the approaching visit.

The reception was such as to satisfy the most exacting, the most arrogant ambition. It was on April 16th, 1855, towards evening, that Napoleon and Eugénie,¹ with their suite, landed on the coast of England to continue their journey to London the following day under the escort of Prince Albert.²

Every town, every hamlet, was decorated, and marks of homage greeted them at every stage. As the procession passed Hyde Park, elegant carriages and ladies and gentlemen of the aristocracy on horseback lined the route for a mile and a half.

In Windsor there were triumphal arches, the shops were closed, the houses were decorated,

¹ "The Emperor wore the uniform of a general of division, the Empress a straw bonnet and grey cloak, under which the rich colours of a tartan dress were distinguished."—*Times*.

² "Prince Albert inspected the pier at Dover" (then an unfinished work) "at an early hour in the morning."—*Times*.

and the whole town was on foot to greet their Majesties. Amid the shouts of the people and the heartiest welcome of the Queen, the Imperial pair entered the ancient castle, where Victoria had personally superintended many arrangements for the comfort of her guests.

The day after their arrival, the Queen invested Napoleon with the Order of the Garter, and at the banquet following the important ceremony, the world-renowned Windsor service of gold plate, which is only seen on the rarest occasions, was produced. The guests attended a special representation at the Royal Italian Opera, when *Fidelio* was given, and a verse complimentary to Napoleon was introduced into the National Anthem :—

“ Emperor and Empress,
O Lord, be pleased to bless ;
Look on this scene !
And may we ever find,
With bonds of peace entwined,
England and France combined,
God save the Queen ! ”—*Times*.

The next day the City gave a grand banquet, and the Emperor and Empress were welcomed with enthusiastic songs and speeches by the people who had been the deadly enemies of Napoleon I. ; and in the same land where Prince Napoleon had lived as an exile, sick and

neglected, often in need of bare necessities, as Napoleon III. he was received with flattering adulation as an ally and faithful friend.

In the leading article with which the *Times* of April 16th welcomed their Majesties, we read:—

“It is not merely a great potentate like the late Emperor of Russia, or a king like Louis Philippe, who professed to cultivate a personal intimacy with the Queen of England and her family, that the ancient halls of Windsor will this day receive. Louis Napoleon returns to this country elected to supreme power by 8,000,000 Frenchmen, holding in a steady grasp that sceptre which has so often slipped from the hands of the sagacious and the strong, and using the power of France for purposes and objects identical with our own.

“His person, his habits, and the incidents of his life are familiar to all of us. The Empress Eugénie, like himself, has mingled in English society; she received her education in England, and is herself the daughter of an old Scottish house, which connects her more nearly with the people of Great Britain than if her pedigree was derived from the Hapsburgs or the Bourbons.”

This visit to England was productive of all the Imperial pair had expected or wished

for, while British enthusiasm created the most favourable impression in France, and sealed the confidence of the people in Napoleon's capacity.

The alliance with the Royal family in England added prestige to the new dynasty throughout Europe, for after such warm proofs of friendship from one of the oldest Courts, the other royal houses had no longer any valid reason for refraining from visiting the Tuileries. Eugénie's personal wishes were at last fulfilled, even beyond her expectations, for she had not only gained the favour of Queen Victoria, but had made of her a friend for life.

We have noticed that she had approached Victoria with deep feelings of respect for a hereditary sovereign and an excellent woman, and, with the natural frank-heartedness of a Spaniard, she had never for a moment disguised the friendly feelings which she entertained towards her. On the other hand, her sister on the English throne had heard such contradictory reports, censorious and complimentary, about the Empress, that she was interested, not to say curious, to make the acquaintance of this much-talked-of guest.

For her, whose ideas were confined to a

narrower circle, the tinge of adventure connected with the beautiful Spaniard had all the attraction of novelty, and the meeting with her was therefore an event in her life.

The first interview with the fascinating Eugénie at once produced a good impression upon the Queen. There was little resemblance between this dignified woman and the "lioness" of watering-places, as she had formerly been called, while the refined, truly Imperial air that rested on her whole person made Victoria forget the reports that had reached her, and she could not resist the grace, amiability, and warmth that were displayed in order to win her affection.

Eugénie has never ceased to be proud of this friendship "at first sight" that was formed in Windsor, and which, as is well known, has been more firmly cemented in the course of years by mutual visiting and an uninterrupted correspondence.

A few months after this first meeting, the Queen of England, accompanied by the Prince Consort and their two eldest children, returned the visit of their new friends. It was over four hundred years since an English sovereign had been in Paris, and the greatest importance was attached to this attention.

The Queen, who dwells with detail and enthusiasm on this journey to France in her diary, describes their reception as follows:—

“After having left Osborne at five o'clock in the morning of August 18th in the newly built yacht *Victoria and Albert*, we approached Boulogne between one and two, and were welcomed by the shouts of the people and the troops that lined the shore. While the sailors were bringing our vessel to land, the Emperor was standing in the burning heat, surrounded by a brilliant staff, waiting to receive us. At last the gangway was run out. The Emperor stepped on to it; I met him half-way, and he kissed my hand. We four—the Prince, the Prince of Wales, the Princess Victoria, and I—entered a carriage and drove to the station through the tightly packed, decorated streets, accompanied by the Emperor on horseback.”

The distinguished guests met with a brilliant reception in Abbeville and Amiens; then St. Leu and Montmorency were passed, after this the fortifications, and finally the capital was in sight. The arrangements here were on a magnificent scale, and the Empress had driven through the city on the previous day to see that everything was well and tastefully carried out. The railway station was decorated with lovely flowers, and

eight pretty young girls of good family, wearing evening dress, were in readiness to offer bouquets to the Queen.

“Imagine,” continued Victoria in her journal, “these high houses and broad streets decorated in the most charming manner with banners, flags, triumphal arches, flowers, and brightly illuminated inscriptions, crowded with people, and lined with well-ordered, enthusiastic soldiers, among whom the National Guard, the troops of the line, and the Chasseurs d’Afrique presented a varied spectacle. Unceasing were the shouts of ‘Vive la Reine d’Angleterre!’ ‘Vive l’Empereur!’ ‘Vive le Prince Albert!’”

The royal party, enlivened by stirring music, the beating of drums, the flare of torches, and the shouts of the multitude, took the line of the Boulevards, down the Rue Royale, the Place de la Concorde, the Avenue de l’Impératrice, and through the Bois de Boulogne to St. Cloud, where the Empress, the Princess Mathilde, and the officers of the household were waiting at the foot of the staircase.

The first Exhibition in Paris was open at this time, and the eight days which the English royal family spent at the French Court were therefore fully occupied in visiting it, as well as

the other attractions of the capital, though there were, of course, many festivities arranged in special honour of the guests.

The visit was brought to a close by a ball at Versailles, which surpassed any entertainment since the days of Louis XIV. Three thousand invitations were issued to the élite of France and distinguished strangers from foreign lands. Gold-embroidered uniforms were conspicuous, and the ladies wore diamonds that had cost fabulous sums, while they vied with each other in the magnificence of their lace and gold brocade.

The Empress, who looked brilliantly beautiful at the ball, had, however, been little seen during these last few days. She had been obliged to retire from dinner on the day of the arrival of her guests, and afterwards she was repeatedly compelled to apologise for her absence on the plea of indisposition. But, for the very reason that she was prevented from participating in public festivities, Eugénie became all the more intimate with Victoria in the home circle, where intercourse was made as genial and unreserved as possible. Napoleon and Prince Albert sang duets; the Queen took sketches of the environs of St. Cloud, and not unfrequently found her

way to Eugénie's private rooms, where the two sovereigns sat together in confidential talk for an hour at a time.

A friendship may be awakened by some exterior advantage and become cemented by outward circumstances and influences, but it can only last for life when two are thrown together who, in spite of marked dissimilarity in many points, are in perfect harmony in essential particulars. And because the friendship between these two sovereigns has been so intimate, and above all so durable, it must be a proof that their apparently totally different natures have not only learnt to love each other, but to understand each other, and mutually to value their best qualities.

Eugénie had more assurance and less prejudice than her friend, while Victoria possessed the superiority and composure of inherited power. But the mainspring in both was a firm will and strong devotion to their family, as well as to the nation over which they were proud to rule. Therefore the more intimately the Queen knew the Empress, the more thoroughly she was able to appreciate her good qualities, and the nearer Eugénie was allowed to draw to England's sovereign, the

more honoured she felt in her friendship, the more deeply attached to one whose loyalty has never been weakened by adversity, but whose sympathising devotion has, on the contrary, only increased with time.

CHAPTER VII.

BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.

IT was currently reported, immediately after the return of the Emperor and Empress from London, that further travelling was in contemplation: that it was the intention of Napoleon to proceed to the seat of war, place himself at the head of the united armies, and take Sebastopol; also that Eugénie would accompany him to Vienna or Constantinople. But these rumours were hushed during the preparations for the opening of the Exhibition, and they died completely away when distinguished guests arrived at the Tuileries, including the kings of Sardinia and Portugal, who, with Queen Victoria, were the first in a long series of royal visitors.

But the increasing indisposition of the Empress was more than sufficient reason to postpone all travelling.

In the early days of her marriage it had

frequently been reported that she was likely to become a mother ; and now, although Napoleon himself told the Court and household that the Empress hoped to present him with an heir, and although the newspapers had stated, in their comments on the ball at Versailles, that the Court jeweller had been obliged to enlarge her diamond belt, nobody believed in the expected event.

But in the course of the winter people began to feel that there might be some truth in these rumours. The Countess Montijo, who had returned to Spain soon after the Imperial marriage, came back to Paris, and never left her daughter's side. The usual Court entertainments were suspended, the Empress was never seen on horseback, and people really became eager and expectant.

Eugénie was taken ill during the evening of March 15th, and when it was reported that her life was in danger, crowds of anxious enquirers hastened to the Place de Carrousel, the Louvre, and the Tuileries. The greatest disquietude reigned in the palace. The Emperor, who was painfully agitated and refused all food, hardly quitted his wife, whose sufferings were so acute that it was feared the aid of chloroform would

be needed. The physicians were fully aware that they would be compelled to use instruments, though they delayed as long as possible, realising the weight of responsibility that rested upon them. But at last they were obliged to tell the Emperor that an operation was unavoidable. "Think only of the Empress," was his reply.

The prolonged agony was at length over, and the Prince Imperial saw the light, but Eugénie paid for the life of her son with weakened health for herself.

The reports circulated about the Empress's perilous condition had kept the capital in a state of feverish anxiety all through the night, and as soon as it became known that the expected event was imminent, the members of the Legislative Corps, the Senate, and the Municipal Council had assembled for a general meeting, which lasted from midday till half-past one the following morning, when they dispersed, having lost all hope of receiving tidings of a happy birth.

They reassembled at an early hour, when the news was at last announced to them that a prince was born, while 101 guns proclaimed the important fact to the people. The Chairman, who communicated the message of the Duc de

Morny to the meeting, was interrupted by boisterous shouts of enthusiasm, and only added "I see that you all share in the joy of France," before he dismissed the meeting with a hearty cheer for the Imperial house, which was taken up by the crowd, and resounded through the streets till nightfall. Flags were hoisted in every direction, and the busts and initials of the Emperor and Empress were decorated with flowers and garlands.

The Municipal Council voted 200,000 francs to feast the poor, and at night the capital was brilliantly illuminated.

The joy of the people was universal, and the bliss of the parents unspeakable. With tears in his eyes the Emperor took the little Prince in his arms, and carried him to the expectant ladies and gentlemen of the Court. He ordered 1,000,000 francs to be distributed at once for charitable purposes, and announced that he and the Empress would become sponsors to all legitimate children who should be born during that day within the limits of his empire. He also gave permission for the return of all exiles with the proviso that they must submit to his government, and give their word of honour to abide by the laws of the land.

About the time of the birth of the Imperial child, a Congress was held which terminated the war in the Crimea and restored peace to Europe. Napoleon, on the highest pinnacle of power and influence, was arbitrator, and the world no longer felt doubtful as to the durability of his Empire. It did not, therefore, seem to be in the least presumptuous when, in his acknowledgment of the congratulations from the Legislative Corps, he expressed the hope that his child's future life would be brighter than that of recent heirs to the throne of France.¹

"The universal rejoicing," he said, "which is apparent on the birth of the Prince Imperial does not banish from my memory the grievous fate which has befallen those who were born on the same spot and under similar circumstances. If I hope that my son will be more fortunate in the future, it is mainly because I rely on God, whose protection I cannot doubt when I see how, by a combination of extraordinary circumstances, He has restored all that was overthrown forty years ago, as though, in spite of former

¹ History tells us that this son of Napoleon and Eugénie was the seventh in the course of half a century, who seemed destined to occupy the French throne, not one of whom was allowed to possess it.

sorrow and misfortune, He would bless this new dynasty chosen of the people. Then history contains a lesson which I will not forget: it teaches me, on the one hand, that we must not abuse the favour of fortune, and, on the other hand, that a dynasty has only the chance of existing if it remains loyal to its origin and protects the public interests for which it was founded. This child, whose cradle is consecrated by Peace, by the blessing of the Holy Father, which arrived by telegram an hour after his birth, by the unanimous cheers of the people, whom the 'great Emperor' loved so dearly, will, I trust, prove worthy of the high vocation which awaits him."

If the Emperor had attained his highest wish, the joyful event was of still more significant importance as regards the position of the Empress. For in the event of her husband dying before her, which was probable on account of his seniority, the mother of Napoleon IV. would maintain her power, and even gain in influence.

At the time of their marriage the Emperor had reminded her of the Empress Josephine. Like the first wife of the great Napoleon, she was born under southern skies; like her, she belonged to an old and noble race; and like

her, she seemed destined from her very cradle to wear an Imperial crown.

As she had hitherto failed to have a child, she had even feared that she might share the fate of Josephine and be divorced. But, instead of this terrible blow, Providence had granted her the greatest of all happiness, and as a mother her position was even more secure than before.

Her throne seemed to her the most important spot on earth, the name of Napoleon the incarnation of all that is great and honourable; while to be the mother of an Imperial child was the most important position that could possibly fall to the lot of any mortal.

The hearty shouts of the jubilant crowds which reached her ears only served to confirm her in these extravagant thoughts. She was cheered above measure, almost worshipped as a saint, by the countless pilgrims that approached the cradle of her child.

Presents poured in from all quarters, and the baby received no fewer than twenty-eight orders in his cradle. The congratulatory addresses that were sent from every corner of the Empire were couched in the most rapturous terms, and the newspapers exalted the French dynasty to the skies. Even the "Dames de la Halle" formed

a deputation to welcome the Imperial infant, and "in their way from the palace the fair representatives are said to have been most enthusiastic in the description of the beauty of the young Prince, and of the gracious manner in which they were received by the Emperor."¹ Engravings representing the mother with the lovely Imperial child of France were distributed by hundreds of thousands in the capital and throughout the provinces. Poets sang in honour of the Empress and the Prince, and the following lines by Théophile Gautier were on the lips of all:—

" Au vieux palais des Tuileries,
Chargé déjà d'un grand destin,
Parmi le luxe et les féeries,
Un enfant est né ce matin.

" C'est un Jésus à tête blonde,
Qui porte en sa petite main,
Pour globe bleu, la paix du monde
Et le bonheur du genre humain.

" La crèche est faite en bois de rose ;
Ses rideaux sont couleur d'azur ;
Paisible, en sa conque il repose
Car fluctuat nec mergitur.

" Sur lui la France étend son aile ;
A son nouveau-né, pour berceau,
Délicatesse maternelle,
Paris a prêté son vaisseau.

" Qu'un bonheur fidèle accompagne
L'enfant impérial qui dort,
Blanc comme les jasmins d'Espagne,
Blond comme les abeilles d'or ! "

¹ *The Illustrated London News*, March 29, 1856.

Terrible inundations occurred in the south during the early summer of 1856, which reduced considerable numbers of the inhabitants to want and misery, in consequence of which it was suggested that the christening of the Prince Imperial should be celebrated very quietly.¹

But Napoleon was reluctant to allow an opportunity to be lost without proving to the world that, although his dynasty was young in years, it was quite able to compete with the older monarchies in wealth and magnificence. He determined to send the sufferers the half of the sum set apart for the baptismal *fêtes*; but the remainder was amply sufficient for a brilliant display. It was long since the Parisians had been so excited as on that summer day, June 14th, when Napoleon's heir was to receive Holy Baptism.

At six o'clock in the morning, the loud pealing of every bell and the thunder of the cannon announced that the great day had dawned, when crowds of pleasure-seekers were already prepared to leave their homes. Every boulevard and open space, where workmen had been busy with

¹ He had been privately baptised in the Tuileries a few hours after his birth. The Emperor, Princess Mathilde, Princes Napoleon and Murat, the Duke of Alva, who was the bearer of the "Golden Fleece" from Queen Isabella to the infant, the ministers and cardinals, as well as the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, had been present at the ceremony.

preparations, were occupied in the course of a few hours with crowds of eager people; and when the trains brought their contingents from the provinces and abroad, the throng was so dense that it was almost impossible to cross from one side of the Seine to the other.

The police had taken extensive precautions to prevent any disturbance among the masses, but they proved superfluous in the face of such orderly behaviour.

The streets through which the Imperial procession passed were magnificently decorated, the square in front of the Cathedral was strewn with flowers, banners waved, and the busts of Napoleon and Eugénie were conspicuous on every available spot. On the approach of the Prince Imperial in the gilt gala coach with his *gouvernante* and nurse, he was greeted with hearty cheers, which were not less vociferous when the happy parents arrived immediately afterwards, accompanied by their suite.

The Holy Father in Rome himself stood godfather to the Spaniard's child,¹ and Queen Josephine of Sweden and Norway was his

¹ His Holiness Pope Pius IX. was represented by Cardinal Patrizi, who was commissioned on this important occasion to present the Empress with the "Golden Rose."

godmother.¹ The ceremony was unusually impressive. The whole French episcopate seemed to have assembled in the Cathedral; and as one stepped into the semi-darkness, which was but dimly relieved by faint daylight and by the wax tapers on the altar, the sight of these numerous archbishops, bishops, and other clergy served to recall the gorgeous times of the Middle Ages.

At night the city of Paris gave a splendid entertainment in honour of the Imperial family, at which the entire Court and many distinguished foreigners were present. It was held in the Hotel de Ville, and the French newspapers described it as a brilliant success. The Prefect of the Seine had expended 50,000 francs on flowers alone. A service that was purchased for the occasion cost 250,000 francs, and 100,000 francs were expended on a gallery that was only used this once. The banquet was served in the large hall of the Hotel de Ville, which was illuminated by 18,000 wax tapers. Two orchestras played alternately during dinner, at the close of which all present sang "Vive l'Empereur" standing.

¹ Queen Josephine was represented at the ceremony by the Grand Duchess Stephanie of Baden; but her son Oscar, the present king of Norway and Sweden, was also there.

The attachment of the people to the Imperial infant's mother was prettily and cordially expressed in an ingenious surprise which had been prepared for her, a diorama representing places that were sure to recall pleasant reminiscences.¹

At the close of the banquet their Imperial Majesties stepped out on to a balcony that had been erected in front of the Hotel de Ville, where they were cheered with prolonged and hearty enthusiasm. The immense concourse of people that had turned out to see and to admire were unbounded in their praise of the splendour of the illuminations and fireworks. They were all enraptured with the grace of the Empress and the amiability of the Emperor; but their most untiring theme was this child of France, to whom some popular wit had given the pet name of "Lulu."²

¹ Granada, where she was born; Madrid, with the Prado; the wood at Compiègne where the Emperor had declared his love for her; the apartments in the Elysée which she had occupied during her engagement; their wedding in Notre Dame; the palace of St. Cloud; and the cascade in the Bois de Boulogne.

² At his baptism the Prince Imperial had received the names of Napoleon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph, but he was called Louis Napoleon, like his father.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORSINI'S PLOT — INFLUENCE OF THE EMPRESS ON
POLITICS — HER OPPONENTS — PRINCE NAPOLEON —
PRINCESS CLOTILDE—PRINCESS MATHILDE.

WE have noticed that the birth of the Prince Imperial took place just at the time when Frenchmen had been sharing in the glory of the Crimean war, when the fall of Sebastopol had added to their honours, and when the position of the Emperor seemed to be perfectly secure.

But the nephew of the great conqueror had not been present at the seat of war, and so had lost the chance of winning "personal laurels."

The Italian statesman Count Cavour had, by his wise policy, raised the kingdom of Sardinia to a more prominent position than before, and directed the attention of the Emperor to the fact. A secret interview took place between him and Cavour (1858), and Sardinia was assured of the assistance of France in the event of a possible war with Austria.

But before this promise was actually given, a circumstance occurred which had probably some influence on the decision of the Emperor, and which also deserves to be recorded, because the conduct of Eugénie on the occasion gives but one out of the many proofs we have of her courage.

A special performance was to be given at the Grand Opera, January 14th, 1858, and all the loyal folk of the capital had crowded in front of the building on the chance of catching a glimpse of their Imperial Majesties.

As the carriages were driving up, two bombs were cast into the one occupied by Napoleon and Eugénie. A terrible explosion took place, and the window-panes of houses in neighbouring streets fell shattered on to the pavement; 160 people, soldiers and outriders among them, fell dying, or sorely wounded, to the ground. The Emperor's hat was pierced by the fragment of a shell, and the Empress, who had leant forward to cover her husband, received a slight wound on the temple, from which the blood spirted on to her white silk gown. But, with her usual bravery, she stood up in the carriage and spoke reassuringly to the terrified crowd. Then, as if nothing had happened, their Majesties entered

the theatre, and, with her habitual captivating smile, the Empress acknowledged the homage that had been prepared for them.¹ It is well known that the Italian, Felix Orsini, who threw the bombs, was at once arrested, with all his accomplices, and that from his cell he sent a heartrending appeal to the Emperor, in which he reminded him of his own Italian descent, and that Italy's sons had shed their blood for Napoleon I. It is likewise well known that the *Moniteur*, to the surprise of everybody, published this letter in its entirety.²

In his speech from the throne on New Year's Day, 1859, the Emperor alluded to his intention of breaking with Austria, and when war was declared between that country and Sardinia he hastened to the assistance of his new allies.

After having proclaimed that "Italy must be free from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea," he set out (May 10th, 1859) for the seat of war. The

¹ When Napoleon and Eugénie, after remaining to the very end of the performance, were returning to the Tuileries past midnight, they found the city illuminated; and when they drove out the following day in an open carriage, they again met with innumerable proofs of the devotion of the people.

² Orsini and one of his accomplices were executed. Two others were pardoned on the earnest intercession of Eugénie.

victories of Magenta and Solferino gave additional glory to France, and although the Peace of Villafranca did not satisfy all his proud aspirations, Napoleon was looked upon as the deliverer of Italy.

As we have already remarked, the position of the Empress Eugénie had acquired considerable importance since the birth of the Prince Imperial. Soon after the Orsini plot, the Legislative Assembly had passed a Regency law which appointed her ruler in France during the absence of the Emperor or, in the event of his death, while her son was still a minor;¹ and on the departure of Napoleon for Italy the reins of state were placed for the first time in her hands. It was a critical moment in which to entrust the government to the hands of a woman, and if the war had not been successful, the situation might have equalled that of 1870 in danger. But while assuring the Regent of the devotion of the people, the President of the Legislative Assembly could hardly have failed to perceive that strangers to France

¹ In accordance with this law, Eugénie, assisted by five councillors, was to act as regent until the Prince Imperial had completed his eighteenth year. But as regent she was prohibited from marrying again. If her death occurred before that of the Emperor, and without any fresh provision having been made, the regency was to be transferred to the prince of the Imperial house who at that time should stand next in succession.

had not been without uneasiness when the Emperor left his country.¹

But if on this first occasion, and again later on, the Empress has been credited with an appreciable influence on French politics, it is certainly with some exaggeration. Her regency was, looked upon as a whole, hardly more than an empty comedy, in which Napoleon allowed his wife to act a part. It dazzled the multitude and flattered the Empress to see the name of "Eugénie" at the head of Government resolutions. But whether he was absent,² or she during his presence took any share in the councils of his ministers, the Emperor rarely allowed even one of the threads of his government to slip from his grasp.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that when Eugénie put her energy into the balance she was capable of hindering or promoting

¹ It is evident too from the Empress's speech (May 28th) that she was fully aware of the seriousness of the position, and after other comments she said: "However difficult my task may be, I feel in my loyal French heart that I shall be able to carry it through. I am encouraged, gentlemen, by your faithful co-operation, and by the support of the nation at large, who, during the absence of their self-elected ruler, are not likely to offend against a woman and a child."

² The Empress Eugénie was regent three times: during the Italian war of 1859, during Napoleon's stay in Algiers in 1865, and during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

resolutions disapproved of by the Council. If she had one fixed idea, she would assail the Emperor with such persistent entreaty and importunity that he would yield from sheer weariness. She has also been accused, and not without cause, of intriguing against the ministers if they did not do her will, and of promoting inefficient, not to say mischievous, favourites.

If a *man* at the head of a government is exposed to opposition of all kinds, how much more must it be the case with a *woman*, and especially with a woman like Eugénie, who, in spite of her attractive qualities, was not afraid of courting contradiction.

And Napoleon had no sooner assured to her a share in the regency than opposition was at hand. The enemies of Imperial rule saw peril to the country in female co-operation. She had to contend against the prejudices of society and the jealousy of men; while even a few of the Emperor's best friends openly expressed their disapproval of the power which Eugénie was alleged to possess.¹

¹ Mérimée relates (*Lettres à Panizzi*) that Fialin de Persigny is said to have observed to Napoleon: "Like me, you allow yourself to be ruled by your wife; but *I* only sacrifice my fortune, and that for the sake of peace, while *you* imperil what is best for yourself, for your son, and the whole land. It is as though you had abdicated. You are losing your prestige and disheartening all your loyal and faithful friends"

As we have said, the praise awarded to her in her capacity of Regent was fulsome. Her talents did not lie in the direction of politics, and though she could grasp the importance of details, she had no conception of the complex machinery of government. Besides, taken up as she was with a thousand trifles, fashions, Court entertainments, she had neither time nor capacity to follow up a political scheme with boldness, and above all with perseverance.

But there was a period in which her interference was distinctly harmful, and that was immediately before the Franco-Prussian war, when she strained every nerve to make her power felt in matters pertaining to the Church.

We saw that as a child she was brought up under the influence of Roman Catholicism, that in her youth she had wished to dedicate her life to the service of that Church, and that she had distinctly seen the calling of God in her elevation to the throne. The enthusiastic faith with which she was imbued, and which, so far from declining, only increased with her power, led her to see a sign of especial favour from Heaven in all the good fortune that had befallen her. Imperial honour and dignity, the approbation of the masses, the fawning of cringing

courtiers, her own social triumphs—she accepted all as gifts sent to her by a gracious Providence.

But the worship that sprang from this belief was hardly consistent. She did not uphold the doctrine of humility; the God whom she adored was of her own creation. He was a defender of the Bonapartes, a God compounded of self-esteem, imaginary greatness, and Roman Catholic bigotry. And, under the influence of the marks of favour that she had received, she was tempted to look upon herself as a being of a higher order.

The time was gone by, probably effaced from her memory, when she had been willing to renounce the world and serve the Church in the very lowest capacity. But the spirit of self-sacrifice that had filled her heart for a moment in her youthful days was no more, and the assistance that “Madame” could render to the Church from the throne of France was far more valuable than the enthusiasm which the young girl had been willing to offer.

The adherents of the Papacy were unwearied in their efforts to gain the friendship of Eugénie, while they strengthened her in her conviction that she was selected by Providence to be the support of God’s viceregent upon earth. Filled

as she was with genuine thankfulness, it seemed to her only natural to respond to their wishes, and she therefore placed herself unreservedly at the head of the Clerical party, and agitated with unremitting zeal for the maintenance of Papal authority. She did her utmost to rekindle the strictest spirit of Roman Catholicism in the land, and mercilessly persecuted those who did not adhere in blind obedience to the old Church, while she valued those about her, with but few exceptions, according to their religious views.

Her exaggerated pietism offended the more liberal-minded, and her hatred of those who differed from her caused anxiety, and even created enemies, among whom Prince Napoleon was the most bitter.

Napoleon Joseph Charles Paul (Napoleon Jerome), son of the King of Westphalia, was born in 1822. From February 10th till December 26th, 1849, he was French Ambassador in Madrid, where he first saw the captivating Eugénie Montijo, for whom he entertained great admiration. It is even rumoured that he sought her hand, but that he received no encouragement, either from her mother or herself.

Napoleon III. believed in his call to rule in

France, and the Prince was likewise of opinion that *he* was selected to occupy the French throne. But, while his cousin had relied on *des idées Napoléonniennes*, the Prince had based *his* assurance on his striking likeness to Napoleon I.¹

The Emperor Napoleon had *worked* in pursuit of his aim; Prince Napoleon had contented himself with stroking the Napoleonic lock on his brow by the hour together in front of his mirror. The Emperor had used both force and cunning to obtain his uncle's throne; the Prince was convinced that the features which the glass revealed to him were as letters patent that the crown would one day drop into his lap.

As long as Napoleon III. was childless he had considered himself his heir, as a matter of course. The birth of the Prince Imperial was a disappointment to him, and when the Regency law mentioned above came into force and accentuated the political influence of Eugénie, he allowed jealousy of her power to overrule

¹ As Prince Napoleon gradually became stouter and more unwieldy, with an ever-increasing restlessness in his look, this resemblance, which was always marked, became a perfect caricature, and the Parisians used to say of him: "He has the expression of the Emperor after the battle of Waterloo and his corpulence from St. Helena."

his better feelings. He had never liked the elevation of the Spaniard to the throne, though he had at first concealed his displeasure under the mask of cool politeness. But he no longer disguised the hatred which he nourished, and he persecuted her when and wherever he could with the meanest abuse.

His satellites—several somewhat clever journalists, to whom the *entrée* to the Tuileries by the principal staircase was closed—helped him in his task. *He* invented, and *they* spread, offensive reports respecting the private life of the Empress, the truth of which has never been ascertained. It was this clique that deliberately gave itself trouble to make the nation believe that little “Lulu” was not the Emperor’s son, but a supposititious child, whom the Countess Montijo had secretly smuggled into her daughter’s room.

Then, when the Prince Imperial was growing up, the report was circulated by this same set that he was an idiot, and his jealous relation never spoke of the heir to the Imperial throne of France without a shrug of the shoulders, and he called him contemptuously *le pauvre petit bambin*.

Eugénie heartily reciprocated the hatred of

the Prince. She censured his licentious life and his slanderous tongue, but more especially his cowardice, which was conspicuous on several occasions; and, in order to excite this trait in his character, she worried him with incessant pin-pricks, which goaded him on to ever-fresh attacks.

The relationship between these two declared enemies was not improved after his marriage (January, 1859) with Clotilde of Savoy—the amiable young Princess who was honoured by the people of Paris with the sobriquet of “Sainte Clotilde.”

The Prince had married a king's daughter, in order to annoy the Empress, and the Princess had taken him in deference to the wishes of her father. Personally she almost loathed her husband; for the cynical freethinker, the avowed lover of the actress Rachel and of many others, was not likely to attract the pious daughter of Victor Emmanuel.

Clotilde stood alone at Court and in her own home. She excited the jealousy far more than the sympathy of Eugénie, and the legitimate Princess could not in her heart of hearts help looking down upon the “adventuress.” She kept herself aloof from the Court as far as she was

able, but gathered round her a little coterie of ladies drawn from the old aristocracy of France, who, as we have already remarked, could never demean themselves to do homage to the "Countess." But whenever it was her duty to appear at the Imperial Court, she complied with every detail prescribed by etiquette with graceful dignity; and when Eugénie, who herself often found these Court ceremonies wearisome and exhausting, once asked her if she were not feeling tired, she quickly replied in all innocence, without realising the covert affront that lay in her words: "No, not a bit! I am so accustomed to them at home."¹

If Prince Napoleon was the most hated of the Empress's opponents, he was by no means the only one, even in the family circle. Several

¹ The departure of the Princess from Paris during the disturbances of September 4th, 1870, is very characteristic. While the people were mad with rage, while the "*Marseillaise*" was sung on every hand, and while Eugénie could hardly effect her flight, the Princess Clotilde firmly persisted that if she had to leave the capital it should be in the same manner in which she had entered it, as a princess of an ancient royal house. She ordered her carriage, and drove through the streets of Paris in broad daylight with the Imperial livery, and accompanied by her suite. The masses were a little amused and a little surprised at her temerity; but they treated her with politeness, and never seemed to think of putting any difficulty in her way. And it was not without admiration in the tone that here and there a voice from the crowd was heard to shout: "The Princess Clotilde is a bold woman!"

of Napoleon's distant connections were averse to her.¹ One of these, Madame Ratazzi, whose mother was a Bonaparte, even published a libel, *Madame Eugénie Montijo*, which was suppressed, and contained the most defamatory accusations against the Empress.

Even the amiable and good-natured Princess Mathilde looked askance at her cousin's wife, though she certainly had sufficient tact to keep the antipathy that she felt a secret from the world. But it is hardly too much to say that she disliked Eugénie and entertained abhorrence of her obtrusive pietism. Napoleon kept up a hearty, friendly intercourse with the Princess after his marriage, and was in the habit of consulting her on all important matters. But the Empress never sought her, and she who had once been the hostess of the Tuileries was only to be seen in the Court circle on unavoidable official occasions. But it was not until after the return of the Emperor to his capital as a conqueror, that her opposition to Eugénie was

¹ In accordance with the scale of rank that had been prescribed, the Imperial family (to which belonged King Jerome and his descendants) was followed by the "Emperor's family." In this so-called *famille de l'Empereur* were reckoned the descendants of Joachim Murat and those of Lucien and Joseph, brothers of Napoleon I., who were mutually connected by the marriage of Lucien's son Charles with Joseph's daughter Zenaïde.

apparent in its full force. The assembled people of Italy (March 14th, 1861) had chosen Victor Emmanuel for their king, and the unity of Italy met with the sympathy of France. It is not within the province of this sketch to follow the policy of Napoleon III. in connection with the new kingdom, only it cannot be overlooked, that when the Emperor delayed to recognise the new order of things in Italy, many maintained that the influence of Eugénie was clearly to be detected.

As a zealous Roman Catholic and an ardent admirer of the Pope, she hated Victor Emmanuel, and the fact that Prince Napoleon had married his daughter did not tend to appease her. If it had been in her power she would probably have liked to see the Italian royal house crushed, and the Pope restored to his former temporal authority.

Napoleon scarcely shared his wife's views, even if he was apparently influenced by her; the reason was, less to avoid the stormy scenes which she always brought about, than on account of his conviction that his interests would be promoted by an alliance with the Clerical party.

It was mainly due to their influence that he had been chosen President, and they had also materially contributed to his recognition as

Emperor. He owed them gratitude, and he felt that if he renounced the friendship of the Pope he would rob his throne of a powerful protector. For these reasons he permitted His Holiness to retain Rome with the *Patrimonium St. Petri*, and, at the earnest instigation of the Empress, he left a force of French soldiers in Italy in support of the Papal interests.

But he at the same time acknowledged Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy, and the former States of the Church as provinces included in those of the new kingdom. His vacillating conduct evoked discontent on both sides. The Clerical party attacked his policy, and the free-thinkers were annoyed that he did not sever himself from the Pope, and enter into an unreserved alliance with the King.

The blame of this alleged mistake rests upon Eugénie. Her zeal in support of the Papal chair was well known, and her expression, "If the Pope leaves the Quirinal, I shall leave the Tuileries; I would rather see the Emperor murdered than doomed for ever!" passed from mouth to mouth, and placed her in an unfavourable light among the most intelligent men and women of France.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUCHESS OF ALBA—UNFAITHFULNESS OF
THE EMPEROR—RELIGIOUS MOODS OF THE
EMPRESS — PRINCESS METTERNICH — PROSPER
MÉRIMÉE—VICTOR HUGO.

IN addition to the annoyance caused to the Empress, both directly and indirectly, by the freethinkers, she had sorrows to bear in her private life. In spite of the unfortunate, painful attachment of the young girl to the Duke of Alba, it had never militated against the affectionate intercourse between Eugénie and the Duchess. Time had softened the disappointment of her youth, and the sisters' love, which had known no breaks, had even deepened as years passed on, so that it was no small pleasure when the Duke and Duchess took up their residence in Paris for the winter.

Eugénie had resigned a life of freedom for a throne, and she fulfilled her duties conscientiously, apparently to her own satisfaction. But there must have been times when she longed for the

unfettered life of her young days, and in those lonely hours her thoughts would dwell with double tenderness on her dear ones, especially her mother in Spain, between whom and her younger daughter the Duchess of Alba was a connecting link.

The Duchess had been suffering from an incurable disease for some time, but the Empress had never suspected the dangerous nature of the malady. While travelling with the Emperor in 1860¹ the unexpected news reached them that her sister's condition had become more critical. They were then in Algiers, and Eugénie entreated Napoleon to allow her to return home immediately. But preparations on a large scale had been made in honour of the Imperial couple, and the disappointment of the people would have been intense if the entertainments had been postponed. It was not till after a ball at which the Empress was present, a prey to cruel anxiety, that she learnt the whole truth : her sister was dying.

She at once embarked for France, but before she had set foot on land the Duchess was dead,

¹ They visited Savoy, Nice, Corsica, Marseilles, and finally Toulon, where they went on board the Imperial yacht *L'Aigle*, which was to convey their Majesties to Algiers.

and the despair of the Empress was beyond control. She shut herself up in her own apartments, and would see nobody; it was months before she recovered sufficiently to be able to make her appearance at Court again. But her cup of sorrow was not yet full.

The marriage of Napoleon with the beautiful Spaniard was, as we have seen, the result of pure devotion on his side, but the passion with which Eugénie had inspired him had gradually begun to wane; and although the Emperor always treated his wife with consideration, and although he continued to entertain the same high opinion of her as in the beginning of their married life, he yet gave her many and justifiable grounds for jealousy.

The Duchess of Alba had supported and cheered the Empress in her trials as a wife, and her gentle, much calmer sister had helped Eugénie in many a bitter hour. Now that she was dead, the sense of loneliness was almost more than her warm, expansive nature could bear. With all her cleverness, Eugénie was essentially an impulsive woman, and therefore, in some respects at least, an unreasoning child. While a born ruler hides her griefs from the eyes of the world under a smiling exterior, she

forgot that an Empress must never allow the disquiet and sorrows of her private life to be exposed to the curious gaze of the multitude.

The report that even during the tumult and bustle of war, the Emperor had found time to form an idyllic *liaison* with a young Italian had led her into a blind, passionate outbreak of jealousy, which completely overpowered her when she was exposed for a time to the insults of one of his mistresses in Paris.

During his residence in London, Prince Napoleon had drifted into a perfect vortex of reckless pleasures, and among the different intimate acquaintances that he made was a Miss Howard, who earned his lasting gratitude, for she extricated her lover from difficulties, and even saved him from imprisonment. It was also said that before the *coup d'état* she had advanced considerable sums in furtherance of his undertaking.

Napoleon was not a man to forget services that had been rendered him. He took Miss Howard with him to Paris, where it was universally known that the pretty, fair Englishwoman was the President's mistress. In a letter from Napoleon, in 1849, he writes thus of her:—

“My position has hitherto prevented me from marrying, and as, in the midst of my cares of government in the land from which I have been absent so many years, I have neither intimate friends nor connections of my childhood, nor even relations with whom to enjoy the pleasures of family life, I may surely be pardoned for indulging in a *liaison* which hurts nobody.”

No sooner was he made Emperor than he created her Comtesse de Beauregard, and gave her one of the prettiest country seats in the neighbourhood of Paris. But the exacting mistress was far from content. In return for her devotion, she had probably hoped that she would share the throne of her admirer, and her jealousy of her rival was unbounded. In order to irritate the Empress, she used to show herself in the Bois de Boulogne with her servants, wearing the Imperial livery; and once, when Eugénie arrived at the Grand Opera, the Countess was already there, occupying a conspicuous place opposite to the Imperial box, from which she fixed her eyeglass so pointedly on the Empress, that the latter angrily rose and left the theatre.

Under the double influence of wounded pride and consuming jealousy, Eugénie drove back to

the Tuileries, and announced her intention of leaving her husband. There was a terrible scene, and the *Moniteur* of the following day reported that the Empress was about to leave for the Highlands of Scotland "on account of her health."

But many Parisians were of opinion that she would never return.

Then it became apparent that the reports of a separation were premature, and that when Eugénie had had time to reflect she was not disposed to relinquish her position. She returned at the end of a fortnight, when a reconciliation was effected. But although Napoleon did not alter his habits,¹ and although he had frequent scenes with his wife, it did not hinder her from maintaining her position as supreme ruler in the world of pleasure.

¹ The Emperor was unfaithful to his wife during the whole of their married life. The Empress, whose southern nature disposed her keenly to jealousy, could never reconcile herself to these *affaires d'amour* which were continually intruding themselves upon her notice, for she frequently surprised Napoleon in tender *tête-à-tête* conversation with ladies in close attendance at the Court. One day, towards the fall of the Empire, he had arranged a meeting in the wood of Compiègne with a pretty Italian, who had been his mistress for some time, and who felt so secure in her position that she had dared to publicly insult the Empress. Just as the Emperor was approaching his bewitching mistress, Eugénie rode up like an avenging goddess, and, her Spanish blood being roused, she rushed up to her rival and menaced her with her riding-whip.

It seemed as though the death of her sister, her disappointments as a wife, the persecution of her opponents, and, finally, her uneasiness for years respecting the health of the Prince Imperial,¹ were powerless to rob her of her restless activity.

The priesthood gained more and more influence over her. She became the patroness of convents and other religious houses, many new ones being founded under her auspices. She once thought of going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The plan was relinquished; but she reduced all around her to despair by her fretfulness, bigotry, and caprice. Her Church views in youth had been exaggerated, and there was too much excitement in her hasty revulsions of feeling between religious ecstasy and pleasure-seeking, between her inclination to forsake the world, and her belief that she was destined to occupy an exalted position. This same restless hurry between religious hysteria and feverish

¹ He had been attacked with malignant scarlet fever after a ball at the Tuileries, and was confined to his bed for some considerable time. The greatest care was needful, and the Empress watched him night and day, till at last he was able to get up, and on his birthday the doctor allowed him to take a short drive for the first time. The air was too keen; the Prince took cold, and had a relapse. From this time till he was about thirteen or fourteen his health was more or less uncertain.

longing for empty triumphs, between exuberant mirth and deep melancholy, continued to be of frequent occurrence even in later life.

Like most beautiful women devoted to worldly pleasures, she was often disgusted with them, for the very reason that it was so easy for her to have nearly all she could possibly wish for in her daily life. In the midst of the most splendid entertainments, she was frequently seized with a gnawing, crushing feeling of discontent, and would rush from the brilliantly lighted rooms and gay crowd into her oratory, to relieve her weariness of life by kissing some sacred relics or supplicating her Creator for help. She was a regular coquette with her religious exercises and church attendance, but she always gained her point of attracting attention. She was rarely at Mass without being observed by crowds of people, staring at her with opera-glasses or counting how many times she crossed herself with Spanish quickness and frequency.

Perhaps the Empress sought for pardon for her vanity in these exercises, or perhaps she used them as a sort of screen against the thought of death, but at any rate the fruits of religion were not apparent in her life. The time that could be spared from arranging Court festivities or

devising new styles of dress was that spent in kneeling before her Madonna. She hastened to a ball from a church service, and rushed from her oratory to consult her milliner.

Her shattered nervous system was probably the main cause, but more especially her unhealthy religious mania, that she was tormented with visions and presentiments of her approaching fall. She became subject to fits of convulsive laughter when annoyed, or to violent attacks of hysterical weeping without any apparent cause. Sometimes she laboured under the conviction that she would share the fate of Marie Antoinette, and then piously collected every memento of that unhappy Queen.

But, endowed as she was with an easy, lively temperament, these heavy, depressing moods could not gain a permanent mastery over her. Opposition on the one hand was met by smiling hope and the joy of existence on the other, while such a warm-hearted disposition as hers could not possibly fail to make friends with many in her immediate circle. Among those intimacies, none has a greater claim to interest than that with the Princess Metternich, because of all the ladies of the Court not one has been spoken of and criticised as persistently as she has.

On the conclusion of peace in 1860 between the Italian and French allies and Austria, the Metternichs had removed to Paris. The Prince had recently married, and his young wife had been the darling of the Court at Vienna.

Pauline Metternich was at once a type of the gay, witty, lovable, careless Viennese and the high-bred representative of the old exclusive aristocracy of Austria. She came to Paris in all her freshness and originality, with her head full of eccentric conceptions which she never took the trouble to hide.

Except for a pair of sparkling eyes, she was not pretty, but she had a distinct partiality for beautiful women, whom, with the exception of the Empress, she cast into the shade by her own attractive personality.

The Austrian Embassy in the days of the Empire was the centre of the intellect, position, and aristocracy of Paris. Here were to be seen the reigning celebrities in art and literature, the highest officials of the Imperial Court, and the proud Legitimists of St. Germain; while the Emperor and Empress frequently honoured it with their presence.

From the first moment of their acquaintance the Princess had conceived an enthusiastic admira-

tion for Eugénie, and Madame Carette¹ relates in her *Mémoires* that one day in Compiègne she was speaking of the Empress and of her devotion, when she exclaimed with Austrian vivacity and enthusiasm: "I only wish I could be her Princesse de Lamballe."

"More than one Frenchwoman," replied Mademoiselle Bouvet, who was present, "would aspire to such an honour."

With the exception of her young niece Anna Murat (who became Duchesse de Mouchy), for whom the Empress entertained the devotion of a mother, no friend stood nearer to her than Princess Metternich. Harmony of thought and a certain magnetic attraction impossible to explain gave birth to a friendship which was strengthened by many years of sympathetic intercourse. Pauline's liveliness found an echo in the naturally bright temperament of the Empress, and her rich intellect brought out the strong points of Eugénie's cultured mind. She was the life and soul of the *fêtes* at Compiègne and Fontainebleau, and the fresh, spontaneous bright-

¹ Madame Carette, granddaughter of Admiral Bouvet, was appointed second reader to the Empress in the early sixties, and was promoted to the office of *dame du palais* on her marriage, shortly before the fall of the Empire. She received numerous proofs of the attachment of the Empress, and seems to have shown gratitude to her during the time of her misfortune.

ness which she introduced into soirées that were frequently dull, could not fail to charm one who was really so cheerful and lively as the Empress.

Princess Metternich was an excellent wife and mother, and took a personal interest in the smallest details of her home. But in society she rose above the minutiae of every-day life; she had the courage to express her opinions on every occasion, and the spirit to maintain them. The puns and witticisms that have been attributed to her, and which found their way from the Court and diplomatic circles down to the people, to be passed from mouth to mouth, are incredible in number, pungency, and subtlety.

Her position in the feminine world was of the highest importance, for after the Empress it was she who regulated all changes of fashion; but, unlike Eugénie, she embarrassed her imitators most painfully. She appeared one day in the plainest style, such as she only could affect; while the costly display of the next was beyond the power and means of any of her adherents. She was most entertaining in the Empress's drawing-room, where she would copy the brilliant trills of the professional singer, Madame Thérèse, in the most inimitably comic manner,

though at the same time with grace and moderation, and on these occasions the Empress was always the first to lead the applause.

But Pauline was essentially the high-born lady, and no one could grace the official receptions at Court with more dignity than she did.

The interest that Eugénie felt in her was not merely personal; it was connected closely with that strong appreciation of hereditary rank to which we have already alluded. The nobility of Austria is the most exclusive in Europe. "The upper ten thousand" occupy a very exalted position in that country; they are encircled by a barrier of social limits and privileges, and the democratic changes of modern times have been powerless to fill up in the least degree, the yawning gulf that exists between the aristocracy and the middle classes.

The Metternich family ranks with the most exclusive, and everything in the Prince's castle awakes reminiscences of the past. *Here* are rooms that have been occupied by crowned heads, *there* armouries containing weapons that have been carried by members of the family, with historical documents and manuscripts recording deeds of valour; while the portrait gallery reveals the power and splendour of the

house. Eugénie loved and appreciated this hereditary greatness, not only because it was one of the things that she did not possess, but because respect for authority is a feature of the Spanish character. And the very smallest reference, direct or indirect, to her own somewhat romantic origin, was the keenest annoyance that could befall her.

The French authoress, Olympe Audouard, relates in her *Mémoires* how the sensitiveness of the Empress on this point very nearly caused a breach in the friendship between the Princess Metternich and herself.

There was a soirée one evening when the Court was at Fontainebleau, which proved to be insufferably dull.

Among the guests, as usual, was the wife of the Austrian Ambassador, who was occupying a suite of rooms in one of the wings of the Castle.

Utterly wearied with the tedium of the evening, she whispered to a friend that she intended to retire, on the pretext of violent headache. At the same time this lady was commissioned to choose a dozen of their mutual acquaintances, and a similar number of "gay cavaliers," who were quietly to withdraw, and then join the

Princess Metternich in her apartments. No sooner said than done. The headache served as an excellent excuse, and the Princess left in haste, in order to prepare for the reception of her visitors, who soon began to arrive in small detachments.

Conversation became lively, music was provided, and the first figure of a quadrille was in progress, when the doors were thrown open to admit the Empress, who, as a courteous hostess, had come to enquire after poor Pauline, whose "violent headache" had filled her with anxiety.

But Eugénie was too excitable by nature to possess perfect calm and self-control, and was sometimes irritated in an extraordinary manner, even by trifles. Instead of being amused at the lively scene on which she had entered, she was annoyed, and accused Madame Metternich in angry words of having failed in the respect due to Majesty.

The wife of the diplomatist answered with equal wrath—

"Madame! You forget that I came into the world *grande dame* and that I will suffer no reprimand to be addressed to me."

In consequence of this step, the Princess had to withdraw from Court for a time, and it was

only by degrees that the old cordial intercourse was restored.

But the Empress generally looked upon her friend's extravagances with a kind, indulgent smile, and Pauline's caprices did not hinder her from confiding in her on serious occasions. She enjoyed long private talks with her, and entertained the highest opinion of her advice and judgment. But the Princess Metternich hardly played a greater part in this little private circle than the brilliant author Prosper Mérimée¹—the Empress's "Court fool," as he jokingly called himself.

The friendship of the poet for the Count and Countess Montijo had been transferred to the Imperial rulers of France. Although, strictly speaking, he was not within the Court circle, Napoleon and Eugénie treated him almost as a member of the family; and the bigoted Empress not only admired in him the gifted author, but entertained almost a daughter's devotion for the pronounced freethinker.

Eugénie was an unalterable friend even to her opponents, if she respected them. For instance,

¹ Prosper Mérimée (born 1803) died in Cannes 1870, a few weeks prior to the fall of the Empire. In a series of letters to different persons he has contributed numerous characteristics of Napoleon, Eugénie, and others.

Napoleon's constant companion and secretary, Moquart, who, as we said in a previous chapter, had opposed the Emperor's marriage, was always treated by her with the greatest consideration.

She could even derive enjoyment from enemies if they were clever enough to put humour into their attacks. A striking instance of this was the pleasure with which she read Henri de Rochefort's shameful articles ; and while the rancorous journalist of the last year of Napoleon's reign was the terror of the other members of the Imperial family, the Empress thoroughly enjoyed his masterly satires, and none the less when they were directed against herself.

No person was more hated under the Empire than Victor Hugo, for the *coup d'état* and its leaders were more passionately condemned by him than by anyone else ; and when it was announced that a general amnesty was to be proclaimed, the terrified organs of Imperialism expressed the hope that one man, "the Tyrtæus of the Gauls," might be permanently exiled from the hospitable shores of his native land. Napoleon was far too prudent to consent to this exception, and Victor Hugo could have returned like the rest. But, instead of availing himself of the permission, he continued to publish from

Guernsey, his self-chosen place of banishment, furious attacks upon the Empire.

It is greatly to the credit of Eugénie that she always found an excuse for the poet's bitter hatred, even during the perusal of his works; and his merciless satire, *Napoléon le Petit*, together with his inflammatory poems against the Emperor, *Les Châtiments*,¹ never tempted her to forget his importance as a writer. She said with Runeberg :—

“ Han är vår fiende—vålan,
Vi äro fiender som han ;
Att han står till med frojd som vi,
Er det ett ondt deri ? ”

“ And if our enemy he is,
His enemies we likewise are ;
Why should he not enjoy to strike ?
Say, ‘ ’tis a shame ’ who dare ? ”

¹ In a collection of poems, *Les Châtiments*, published 1853, the *coup d'état* is described, and Napoleon stigmatised as a perjurer and a murderer.

CHAPTER X.

SPLENDOUR OF THE EMPIRE.

“IT was a singularly cosmopolitan company that formed the Court of the Second Empire,” truly observes Herman Bang in his *Critical Studies and Sketches*.

It was a motley, unreal set during the palmy days of the Empire, and the daily life of the capital formed a frame to that of the Court. Paris was even more than ever the brilliant spot chosen of all whose existence was adventurous and ephemeral. There were new meeting-places and new names ; celebrities sprang up like mushrooms, and withered before the sun went down ; life was short and consequently rapid, and men built castles, like the genii of Aladdin, to inhabit them but till nightfall. Those who read of this life, or can personally recall it, must involuntarily think of the conjurer's tricks in some great arena, where the spectators are dazzled and confused by a brilliant infinity of

variegated, shining balls, that fill the whole building with their buzzing, whirring noise; the jugglers who throw them change incessantly, but the sparkling balls "go on for ever."

Life in Paris was like this game of the conjurer. And what a *mise en scène* had been prepared for the great drama! Paris was the scene of Haussman's fairy work and of the brilliant comedy of the Universal Exhibition. In fact, the whole drama resembled a farcical play, the moral of which must not be too closely enquired into.

People who began to "live" yesterday, and yet have every prospect of dying to-morrow, are not over-scrupulous; their aim is first and foremost to "live," and that right merrily. They do not trouble to think—it is too hard work—they worship an inspiration; they live under its influence. They have a high opinion of worldly wit; they are in no wise perplexed about the "soul." In short, they live like children of the hour. And such were these; they were the issue of a chance which they called "luck," and they were as heedless as all men who believe in their "star."

Only this so-called happiness was the prey of a worm: ennui.

But this social condition was never universal in France. The great majority of provincials, who supported the Second Empire, were not cognisant of it. For them it was the restoration of the First, only in still greater glory. The richest inheritance, the choicest legacy, is certainly the charm that clings to a name.

Napoleon III. knew how to value the name he bore, and never forgot that it had paved the way to his throne. Poets and historians who had eulogised the memory of the Conqueror had, with or without meaning it, furthered the ambitious plans of his brother's son. And it was his Uncle's victories which, in the first instance, had raised him to the pinnacle he was now occupying.

The name which had fostered his eager dreams, which had made Europe tremble, and had intoxicated France—this name must also be the chief support on which his fame must rest. He sought by every means in his power to preserve all Napoleonic traditions, and to lull the Parisians into sweet dreams that the glorious days of Napoleon the Great had returned.

Several families were represented at Court that had been known in his Uncle's time, and at the entertainments that succeeded each other without intermission, it was the one main object to

recall the magnificence of the First Empire. Officials, ministers, senators, and chamberlains wore uniforms heavy with gold embroidery. "Les Cent Gardes" who were on duty at the Palace, and rode before and behind the Imperial carriage, were fantastic in their splendour, and reminded one of some princely pageant on the stage. Many customs from the time of Louis XIV. were revived to aid in the display of the young Court. A straining after effect undoubtedly characterised the whole mode of life, and it has been said, hardly unjustly, that it was a theatrical Imperial Court, of which Eugénie was the centre. But this glittering, and at the same time tasteful, spectacle was acceptable to Frenchmen, who are naturally susceptible to outward appearances, and it was productive of hearty applause, which, however, belonged more to the effect than to the action of the play.

An almost fabulous magnificence was displayed when foreign sovereigns came as guests. These visits became more and more frequent as Napoleon increased in importance; indeed, there were times under the Second Empire when the whole solar system of greater and lesser potentates met with one another in the streets of Paris. Deputies from far-distant lands, almost unheard

of by the people, contributed to enhance the brilliancy of the scene. The excitement was great, for instance, when the Queen of Madagascar, dressed in white, with her dusky countenance closely veiled, drove through the streets of the capital, attended by servants armed to the teeth. And, in the eyes of the French, Napoleon seemed a ruler of the world when the black ambassadors from Hayti and other emissaries from far-distant zones bent the knee in homage before him.

Throughout the winter there was a morning meeting every Thursday in the Tuileries, attended by ministers, diplomatists, generals, and envoys, and in the evening a reception, to which officials of high standing were invited with their ladies. Four balls were also given in the course of the winter, for which about 5,000 invitations were issued, and it is difficult for us at the present day to conceive the splendour of these meetings. On every step of the grand staircase, which was decorated on both sides with garlands of flowers, stood the "Cent Gardes." Crowds of invited guests waited in the galleries-until it was announced that the Salle des Maréchaux was thrown open, which occurred immediately on the entrance of their Majesties, who took their seats on a raised

daïs, attended by the Princes and Princesses. The uniforms were magnificent, each more dazzling than the other.

The chamberlains wore scarlet coats with broad gold embroidery, the equerries green and gold, the huntsmen green and silver, and the Prefects of the Palace crimson and gold. The Masters of the Ceremonies had violet, some other officials pale blue uniforms, both ornamented with silver cords. And in addition to these brilliant French uniforms, were to be seen many conspicuous national costumes worn by princes and officers from every kingdom of the world. The ladies were all extravagantly dressed, and as there were many whose names were absolutely unknown, it was only by the grandeur of their gowns and ornaments that they could hope to attract the least attention.

On these occasions the Empress only danced the opening quadrille. At eleven o'clock she and the Emperor were accustomed to leave the Salle des Maréchaux for the Galerie de la Paix, where dancing was also going on.

Eugénie possessed the truly royal gift of never forgetting a face or a name, and as she passed through the densely crowded rooms, she was never at a loss for a suitable greeting or ques-

tion to be addressed to each one. But it was not only that she never forgot her acquaintances, for even as years passed on, she could recall in minute detail the circumstances under which she had last met them, while her warm-heartedness led her to greet with especial fervour all those whom she had known in her youth as she hastened from group to group, amiable towards all.

But no sooner had their Majesties withdrawn than Eugénie's strength was exhausted, and she sank down under the weight of the numerous Crown diamonds which she always wore on these occasions. She frequently did not wait for her women, but tore off her diadem and ornaments herself, throwing them into the lap of a lady-in-waiting, who took them away trembling, for each single jewel represented a fortune.

Besides the large Court balls, to which most Frenchmen could obtain an invitation if their birth and position were suitable, there were fancy balls during the carnival, which were far more exclusive, but extremely lively and sparkling with elegance and originality. The Emperor and Empress never gave balls during Lent, but there were instead four Court concerts, conducted by Count Bacciocchi, the Director of

the theatres, together with Auber, leader of the Court orchestra, and all the most celebrated artistes of the day.

But infinitely more attractive than any of these semi-official entertainments were the Monday soirées in the gallery leading into the Empress's private apartments, and which became known throughout Europe under the name of "Lundi de l'Impératrice."

About two or three hundred guests, the inner circle of the Court circle, received invitations for these Mondays, when Napoleon and Eugénie did the honours in the most charming manner and conversed freely with all. Here shone the original Princess Metternich, whom we have already named, and the captivating Princess Anna Murat, Duchesse de Mouchy, whom everybody thought lovely, except by the side of the Empress!

Here, before the middle of the sixties, was to be seen the chivalrous Count Walewski, whose entire personality recalled that of his father, Napoleon the Great.¹

¹ The Count was the illegitimate son of Napoleon I. and the lovely Polish Countess Walewski, who followed the Emperor to Elba, but was sent back out of consideration to Marie Louise. He was warmly interested in the restoration of the kingdom of Poland, but gradually withdrew from Napoleon III. when his

Then there was the Emperor's half-brother, the Duc de Morny,¹ and his early friend and helper at the time of the *coup d'état* the Duc Fialin de Persigny, with his beautiful but eccentric wife.²

It was here that Prosper Mérimée displayed his inexhaustible wit and humour, that the Emperor's favourite, General Fleury, and the elegant Marquis de Caux, who afterwards relative sacrificed all thought for Poland in favour of friendship with Russia.

The *Morning Post* of August 15th, 1898, has the following :—

“Few of the men of the Second Empire had a more striking career than the President of the Congress of Paris. A diplomatist of wide experience, a statesman who filled the most responsible posts, Comte Walewski was one of the most brilliant members of the society of his epoch. In his youth he was a prominent figure among the ‘dandies’ of the time, and later on he was renowned for his luxurious hospitality, dispensed at the official residence now occupied in sober style by the President of the Chamber.

¹ Morny was the illegitimate son of Queen Hortense and Napoleon I.'s adjutant-general, Count Flahaut. He was adopted by a poor emigrant, Count Morny, but brought up by his paternal grandmother, the well-known authoress Comtesse de Souza. He was created Duke in 1862, in acknowledgment of the important services he had rendered to Napoleon III. He died in 1865.

² Fialin de Persigny's flighty wife so far forgot herself one evening in the sixties as to violently box the ears of an admirer during a ball at “Mabille,” where she met him in the company of a woman of bad repute. The latter fell upon her; a regular fight ensued in presence of the assembled company between the lady from the Imperial Court and the habituée of the demi-monde, until the police were compelled to interfere. Madame de Persigny did not dare to appear at the Tuileries after such scandalous behaviour, and for the same reason her husband was obliged to absent himself from Court for many years.

married Adelina Patti, led the cotillon, and invented new figures which invariably went the round of Europe.

Eugénie did not aim at being first in a crowd, but at being the belle among the lovely; and she therefore liked to see winning faces about her. It was a rich source of satisfaction to her, and she really had a number of pretty women at her Court: the Marquise de Gallifet, the Comtesse Pourtalés, the Duchesse de Morny, the Duchesse de Malakoff, and many others.

The hunting parties at Compiègne were a great feature of the Second Empire, and the display on these occasions was perhaps the most brilliant and unique of all.

Only a limited number of ladies and gentlemen were invited, in consecutive detachments; and the invitations, generally for a week, were prepared with as much forethought as if they formed part of some important affair of state.

The ladies considered fifteen new gowns of the most costly description as absolutely necessary for their week's visit. Some refused on the plea of ill-health rather than incur such extravagant expense, while others alleged reduced incomes which made acceptance impossible. In addition to officials of high rank, literature, art, science,

and the press were liberally represented.¹ The guests at Compiègne were one and all welcomed in the same genial manner, without a thought of their individual politics. And it was certainly a pretty sight when the Imperial hunting party rode at full speed in the regulation dress of the eighteenth century, followed by the Empress and the other ladies, either on horseback or in carriages, wearing becoming habits and three-cornered hats, like the huntsmen.

The 15th November, the "name day" of the Empress, was always kept at Compiègne with great ceremony, when tableaux and pieces composed for the occasion were performed. The Princess Metternich, who was generally one of the guests, informally undertook all the arrangements, and the Empress pretended to be perfectly unaware that any preparations were being made in honour of the day.

Next to these Court entertainments, the Opera was the favourite meeting-place of society under the Empire. The "Grand Opera," which at that

¹ On the list of guests invited to Compiègne we find literature represented by the following names :—Alexandre Dumas fils, Emile Augier, Ernest Legouvé, Octave Feuillet, Edmond About, Gustave Flaubert, and Prosper Mérimée ; the fine arts by Meissonnier, Gustave Doré, Auber, Berlioz, Gounod, Ambroise Thomas ; the press by Emile de Girardin, Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac, and his son, Paul de Cassagnac ; science, among others, by Pasteur.

time was not occupying the magnificent palace where the most important lyrical lays of Paris are now represented, was at home in the somewhat narrow Rue Lepelletier; but this did not prevent the attendance either of the Imperial family or of the highest classes of society in the metropolis. Nobody was allowed to be present at the Opera, at least in the boxes and the upper circle, except in full evening dress, the ladies in light-coloured, low bodices, and the gentlemen either in uniform, or dress coat and white tie. And these elegant costly gowns, the jewels with which each tried to outshine the other, gave the Opera a festive appearance every evening, such as is only witnessed in other capitals at great gala representations.

Among the customs dating from the time of Louis XIV. which the Emperor had revived, was one which required the Director of the theatre to meet their Majesties at the entrance, carrying a branched candlestick, and then to accompany them up to the Imperial box. The impression made by the entrance of Eugénie and Napoleon was not one ever to be forgotten, when every guest rose and bowed to their Majesties. Among these men in brilliant uniforms and these richly dressed women were

to be seen the celebrities of France, indeed of all Europe, princes, diplomatists, artists, men of letters, who congregated during the intervals in the brilliantly lighted foyer, where acquaintances sought each other out, and the scene became like a Court soirée. Even the Emperor and Empress received visitors in their box, and Napoleon would not unfrequently confer with his Ministers, or utilise the interval to exchange a few words with one of the foreign ambassadors.

Although the "Grand Opera" was the temple of art in which the Empress was most frequently to be seen, it was not her favourite theatre. She was not only incapable of understanding classical music, but she absolutely disliked it. Neither did she appreciate the well-written pieces that were performed at the Théâtre Français. She preferred anything that would provoke a hearty laugh, and was extremely fond of Offenbach's bright airs. It is an index to her taste that she meant to pay a special compliment to the Emperor Alexander of Russia during his stay in Paris, 1867, by sending him an invitation for *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*.

I have hinted that she saw her own prototype in Marie Antoinette, and that she was even

tormented with a persentiment that the gruesome fate of the Queen would be hers; it is quite true that there is some resemblance between the Spaniard and the unhappy daughter of Maria Theresa. Both possessed beauty and grace, with strong will and character; both were inordinately extravagant, while their thirst for pleasure kept them aloof from all serious occupation in their days of prosperity. Still Eugénie avoided the thoughtless acts of which Marie Antoinette was guilty,¹ and, instead of heedlessly risking her popularity as the Queen did, she was ceaselessly trying to increase and strengthen it.

Neither could Eugénie hinder slander from dogging her footsteps. It was very doubtful that one who had been raised to the throne purely by virtue of her beauty would maintain her seat and continue a pattern of morality; and we have seen how even members of the family

¹ When she was utterly weary and tired of the monotony of Court life, it sometimes happened that, like Marie Antoinette, she put on a disguise, and went out in search of adventure, but of a very harmless character. On these occasions, always in the evening, she wore a black wig, a pair of blue spectacles, and a plain silk gown, which she borrowed from one of her ladies. With a few companions, just enough to protect her in case of a crowd, she walked up and down the boulevards, and looked in at the shop windows with the delight of a child. But years would sometimes elapse between these little freaks, and the occasions of which we are really sure are very few.

had been busy in their efforts to sully her reputation in the eyes of the people.

Even her admiration for Jacques Offenbach was assigned as a reason for casting suspicion on her virtue. While Offenbach's music was being listened to all over Europe, while his *Belle Hélène* and *Orphée aux Enfers* were being performed thousands of times in Paris, the very same public that derived enjoyment from them asked each other if it was not a sign of flightiness that the Empress was so fond of these equivocal operettas, which reeked of the patchouli of the demi-monde.

It has been spoken aloud and whispered from land to land that the example of the French Court was very corrupt, and that the society of Napoleon and Eugénie was light and frivolous. It has been repeated so frequently and related with so much exaggeration that it seems almost superfluous to recall the fact here that the tone which prevailed in the Imperial household and the immediate surroundings was undoubtedly loose, unrestrained, and pernicious. It is perfectly true that the foundation of the Second Empire was rotten, a natural result of effeminacy and addictedness to sensual pleasures. Life was gay and insolent; it sparkled with luxury;

it was flavoured with wit and humour. Comedies were acted; fancy balls were given; coquetry, dancing, laughing, and the toilet were things of paramount interest. Wealthy idlers were guilty of unseemly freaks, and books of devotion were certainly not the exclusive literature of women steeped in worldly aims. It happened that ladies of high standing did not consider it compromising to visit the *courtisane* Cora Pearl or Madame Thérèse, while they patronised the "Mabille" balls under the protection of a "friend."

But how do the aristocrats usually amuse themselves? Life at the Court of Berlin is much more serious, and Victoria of England has led a much more retired life than her friend Eugénie. But in Vienna, Petersburg, Madrid, and several other Courts the prevailing tone is hardly less frivolous than that in Paris under the Second Empire.

As regards the Empress especially, who stood at the head of this ephemeral Court, she enjoyed herself, and led the fashion of the world.

That she encouraged immorality is absolute slander. Whatever may have been the life of Napoleon and his courtiers—and plenty can be said of them that does not redound to their

credit—no one is justified in saying a worse thing of the Empress than that she closed her eyes to what was going on around her.

The circumstance that even after her hasty flight, when irritation against the dynasty knew no bounds, not a thing was discovered that could compromise her, proves that the Empress of the French had always been careful of her reputation, for it is perfectly certain that she would have met with no mercy, if it had been possible to sully her fair name.

CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE EMPRESS.¹

THE daily life of the Empress was in striking contrast with her Court routine; and in the intervals of the rush after pleasures, described in the last chapter, there were long days of tedium.

Eugénie used to rise at eight o'clock, and regularly spent an hour, often two or three hours, engrossed in her favourite occupation, the study of the toilet. At half-past eleven she breakfasted with the Emperor and the Prince Imperial only, after which Napoleon smoked a cigarette in his wife's apartments, chatting and playing with his little son.

Invariable kindness was a main feature of the Emperor's character, and he was disposed to spoil the child. The Empress, on the contrary, treated his naughtiness and caprices with severity,

¹ The chief points in this chapter are taken from *Souvenirs Intimes de la Cour des Tuileries*, by Madame CARETTE, née Bouvet.

so that the Prince preferred his lenient father to his sterner mother.

The boy drove in the Bois de Boulogne every day at twelve o'clock, when his mother kissed him and made the sign of the cross on his cheek before he left her; for ever since Orsini's attack, she had been in continual terror lest a murderous ball should yet strike one of her dear ones.

Napoleon led a very active life, and left the room before his son; then the Empress retired to her study, which opened out of the audience-chamber, and to which no stranger had access. Here she was at home with her own ways and tastes, surrounded by old reminiscences, what she liked to see about her, and what conduced to her comfort. Here were the likenesses of her family and her most intimate friends, statuettes, busts, and vases, together with a choice little collection of the works of French, Spanish, English, and Italian authors. Every morning she wrote to her mother, and neither engagements nor indisposition, travelling nor royal visitors, induced her to neglect her daily letter. In addition to writing to the Countess Montijo and Queen Victoria, she maintained a lively correspondence with Queen Sophia of Holland, a clever, ambitious woman, and several others.

The attachment of the Queen of Holland to Eugénie does not appear to have been reciprocated in an equal degree. Sophia wrote so diffusely and so frequently that her friend, who did not carry on her share of the correspondence with the same ardour, was often weary of the letters.

When the Empress had finished her private writing, her secretary, Damas-Hilard, and the elderly Countess Wagner, her principal reader,¹ were announced, and she first examined the numerous and very varied petitions which were daily addressed to her.

I have already spoken of her benevolence in a previous chapter, and if it was at all possible, she willingly granted what was asked of her. But the requests with which she was overwhelmed were both absurd and disgraceful; and nervous and irritable as the Empress was at times, such as these were quite sufficient to destroy her good humour. There was nothing that she hated more than petitions accompanied by gifts, and if she suspected that compliments were paid her in order to obtain more substantial

¹ Madame Lebreton, who became reader to the Empress at a later date, did not appear at Court till towards the close of the sixties.

help, they were never successful in gaining her favour.

The study of the Empress opened into an ante-room without windows, in which a lamp was always burning. A little staircase that led to the Emperor's apartments started from this passage, and behind its sliding panels was a series of divisions, distinguished by different numbers and letters.

It was one of the occupations of the Empress to read and sort the papers contained in these pigeon-holes, some of which were very singular documents, interesting contributions to the history of Napoleon I., or to more modern times, in the shape of letters from princes, statesmen, soldiers, or men of learning. When the Emperor carelessly threw any papers away, the Empress collected them whenever it was possible, though Napoleon laughed at her mania, and she herself joked about it. "I run like a mouse after the Emperor's bread-crumbs," she used to say.

The ladies of the Court did not live in the Tuileries, but during the summer, when the Empress was absent from the capital, they were always in close attendance on her. Among these ladies there were naturally some that she preferred to others; but she was compelled to

recognise the inexorable rules of precedence, and even when going for a drive, she was unable to choose her companion. Day after day she stepped into her carriage, followed by the lady whose turn it was to accompany her; day after day she drove out to the Bois de Boulogne, and bowed incessantly to the right and the left; and day after day she returned home just in time to dress for dinner.

But, in addition to these monotonous drives, she sometimes went out in the morning in a simple carriage and pair, with servants in plain livery, and she and the lady in attendance most quietly dressed. In this way she visited her benevolent institutions, the hospitals, and prisons; and when she read of a misfortune in one of the innumerable petitions that were addressed to her which commended itself to her sympathies, she would personally enquire into the details of the case. She would drive to the poorest people and give them help, with comforting words. All this necessitated a well-filled purse, and the money spent during these morning drives amounted to no inconsiderable sum in the course of the year.

"It would be quite as easy to send what I take to the poor," she used to say, "but it is certainly right to do a little good to one's self;

and it becomes easier to bear personal sorrows after contemplating the misery and suffering of others."

One of the few persons with whom the Empress was really intimate in private life was Madame Pollet, or Pépa,¹ as the Empress called her. Pépa was the only Spaniard Eugénie had about her, and she had entered her service when quite a girl. She had accompanied her on all her travels, and watched every change in her life; she had the control of her wardrobe, took charge of her jewellery and personal possessions, and was eager to further her slightest wish. She worshipped her mistress, and would willingly have gone through fire and water for her, if it had been necessary.

Eugénie, on her part, was personally attached to her Pépa, and relied upon her most implicitly, though she always kept her in a subordinate position. Pépa's rooms were opposite those of the Empress, and even after her marriage to a colonel, and her appointment as *trésorière*, Her Majesty preferred Madame Pollet's services at her toilet to those of anybody else.

Madame Pollet is said to have possessed great influence, and it is true that the highest officials

¹ Pépa is the pet name for Josephine in Spanish.

of the Empire and the wives of ministers, generals, and diplomatists did not disdain to use every effort to gain her goodwill, or to overwhelm her with gifts, if they wished to obtain anything from the Empress. But Pépa, who was a timid little woman, took good care not to implicate herself in things that she did not understand; and, continually taken up as she was in carrying out Eugénie's commands, she was far too busy with her mistress to find time or thought for other objects.¹

Dinner was served at half-past seven. The Prince Imperial dined with his parents after his eighth birthday, and all the ladies and gentlemen on duty in the Palace were present.

The Emperor always went to his wife's apartments shortly before dinner, and escorted her to the Salle d'Apollon, where the Court was assembled, and the Empress greeted each member with her customary grace and dignity.

As soon as dinner was served, it was announced to the Prefect of the Palace, who told the Emperor. Napoleon then offered his arm to

¹ Madame Pollet, who became a widow during the war of 1870, followed the Empress to England. She had never been strong, and the air did not agree with her. Eugénie insisted on her returning to France, in order to recruit; but, instead of regaining her health, she died there, forsaken and alone.

Eugénie, and the Court followed in order of rank and position. The whole ceremony was quite simple, but etiquette was punctiliously maintained.

One of the Imperial lacqueys stood behind the chair of the Emperor and that of the Prince Imperial, but the Empress had a young negro, whom she had brought back with her from Algiers, and who offered the different dishes to her with quite as important an air as if he were fulfilling some high official duty. He persisted that he was of noble birth, and absolutely refused to attend to anybody else but the Empress. The waiting was so quick, quiet, and orderly that foreign princes were amazed; and although the dinner always consisted of many courses, and was followed by an elaborate dessert, the Court never sat longer than three-quarters of an hour at table. They returned to the Salle d'Apollon, and generally passed a wearisome evening. The presence of their Majesties naturally precluded all easy conversation; many had nothing to relate, and those who, perhaps, had some interesting topics, dared not introduce them. The Emperor never spoke much, but when the Empress felt that the tension was becoming unbearable, she talked unceasingly, with rather

excited, feverish liveliness, peculiar to the Spaniards.

Occasionally, in order to relieve the tedium of the evening, reading aloud would be suggested. But what book was suitable for such a company? If an English or French novel was selected, it amused the Empress, but wearied Napoleon beyond measure; if a scientific work was chosen, it interested the Emperor, but Eugénie yawned, and the attempt had to be abandoned.

Napoleon was fond of playing "patience," and often had recourse to it; the Empress, on the contrary, only played when she was not disposed to talk, and that was very seldom. Neither music nor cards were provided during these evenings at the Palace, only a kind of lottery game sometimes, to amuse the Prince Imperial. It happened on one occasion that the Empress was seized with a sudden desire to work, and a gentleman-in-waiting was commissioned to procure instantly everything requisite for the making of artificial flowers. Another time she was overcome with a longing to paint on terra cotta, and this freak too had to be immediately gratified.

At ten o'clock a table was brought in with little cakes and tea, which was made and handed

by the ladies, when conversation became a little more general. The Empress retired to her room between eleven and twelve, and usually went to bed at once. Sometimes she kept her younger reader with her while she was undressing, and it not unfrequently happened that she chatted with her after she was in bed, or required her to read selections from the papers aloud to her.

This was the only occasion on which she used the services of her reader. She was herself very rapid, and preferred reading to listening.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. CLOUD AND BIARRITZ—VISIT TO SPAIN—
EUGÉNIE DURING THE ABSENCE OF THE
EMPEROR IN ALGIERS, AND DURING THE
CHOLERA.

THE corridors and staircases in the Tuileries were so dark that it was needful to light them with lamps, both summer and winter, and this, combined with defective ventilation, rendered a residence there almost impossible as soon as spring set in.

The Court always spent the summer months away from Paris, in Fontainebleau, St. Cloud, or Biarritz. Napoleon unfortunately preferred St. Cloud, which was really the summer residence of the Imperial family, and here he sought rest in the serious attacks of illness to which he was subject. Here he could amuse himself with his faithful dog Nero, his companion from a puppy, and here he could watch his roses, and enjoy with childlike glee the selection and

development of new kinds. The Empress preferred Biarritz, and it was she who brought it into fashion, so that it became the favourite watering-place in France, and cast Dieppe, Trouville, and Boulogne into the shade.

It would have been difficult to find in any one corner of the globe such an assemblage of aristocrats, millionaires, thieves eager for gain, high-born ladies, women from the lowest dregs of the demi-monde, and those on the highest rung of the ladder, with individuals whose lives were marred by vice and failure, as in Biarritz. There was hardly a *cocotte* in Paris who would enter into a contract with her lover without an assurance that she should frequent the Imperial bathing-place; hardly a *grisette* in the adjacent towns who would not willingly have pawned her last change of linen rather than not go there for once; hardly a commercial traveller who would not have rushed into debt for the sake of a brief enjoyment of this El Dorado. It provided pleasure of every kind: hotels and private residences, restaurants, shops, and bazaars, to suit all classes of society; and a casino containing theatre, concert-hall, ball and gambling rooms, with a magnificent view from the terrace that ran the whole length of the building.

Frenchmen used to speak of Biarritz as “le lieu le plus vanté l’expression de repos le plus doux, et du plaisir par excellence.” And for such who, while enjoying the beauties of nature, equally desired to catch a glimpse of Imperial grandeur, it must have seemed an Earthly Paradise. For although Eugénie kept herself aloof from the gay life of the town, it was evident to all, and at every step, that the Imperial inventor of novel toilets had hoisted her flag on this spot.

Opposite to Biarritz lies the Château Eugénie, on a rocky plateau about a hundred feet above the sea. It is more like barracks than a habitable castle, and owing to the prevalence of mists from the sea, with frequent storms, neither trees, shrubs, nor flowers will grow in its immediate neighbourhood.

But when Eugénie stepped out on to her terrace in the morning, the sea was below her, and the scudding clouds, that changed form and colour every moment, imparted interesting detail to the shifting beauty of the scene. Everything seemed to be brought together here: the freshness of sea air, the charm of nature, and the bustle of civilisation.

“There is not a castle in France or England,”

says Prosper Mérimée,¹ who was frequently the guest of the Empress, "where one is so perfectly at liberty and free from etiquette, or one that has such a thorough and amiable *châtelaine*. We go for delightful excursions into the Pyrenean valleys, and return home with appetites to be envied."

By the shores of the mighty sea, with its splendid views and an ever-changing panorama before her eyes, Eugénie spent her happiest hours. Here she forgot for a time Court life, her husband's infidelities, and the incessant irritating attacks of Prince Napoleon and his adherents; here she could yield to her naturally childlike, exuberant spirits, and enjoy nature with her little son. She was passionately fond of sea-bathing, and here, perhaps for the first time since her youth, she experienced a longing for a calm life, undisturbed by ambitious craving. Like all Spaniards, she was proud of her native land and its ancient traditions. Her father's noble race, her own happy, as well as painful recollections were all connected with Spain, where, moreover, her aged mother was still living. Now that she had outlived some of her bitter reminiscences, and was conscious too that she had been able to shed lustre on the land of her

¹ *Lettres à une Inconnue* (September 27th, 1862).

birth, she was often seized with an irresistible longing for Spanish manners and customs, as well as the language of her childhood. She frequently made little excursions into Spain from Biarritz, and charmed the meanest peasant with her amiability, as she spoke Spanish and was lavish in her gifts and friendliness. Then the reception that she herself met with in her native land was so hearty and sympathetic that she felt richly compensated for the humiliation that she had experienced in her early days. She saw Madrid again, the scene of so many youthful experiences, and was welcomed with marked distinction by Queen Isabella, who had dismissed her from her Court on the slightest suspicion.

We can hardly wonder that on meeting under such different circumstances one who had looked down upon her in her youth, her heart should have been filled with pleasure, and what an intense satisfaction it must have been to her to show herself to the old grandees in all the glory of her Imperial splendour.

Triumphs like these, full of significance to those who have risen from obscurity, do not belong to the *happiest* enjoyments of life, but they are surely among the most desired, and

for the moment, impart the deepest feelings of satisfaction.

The United States Ambassador in Madrid at this time, who sent a series of articles to an American paper touching his residence in Spain, gives an account of the visit of the Empress of the French to this Court in 1863.

“When one has spent a whole year in Madrid, as I have,” he says, “where evil tongues, both in high and lower circles, have whispered so many defamatory reports respecting the Empress Eugénie, in spite of what one has heard of her extraordinary beauty, one is not too ready to yield one’s self a captive in the expectation of meeting her. A great, if not *the* greatest, power of attraction, that beauty can exercise, certainly consists in the fact that we can associate it with purity and loveliness of soul.

“I hate the Empire and everything connected with it with all my heart. Moreover, I believe I am right that the Empress has come to Spain, and especially to the Court, to pave the way for a union, or, at all events, for cordial co-operation, in the Mexican intrigue.¹ I was, therefore, but little disposed to succumb to her charms; besides, I trusted in the strength of

¹ The expedition to Mexico, in which France in the beginning (1861) had joined England and Spain, in order to protect the economical interests of their subjects. Later on, as is well known, France entertained far wider plans than the other Powers, and wished to form Mexico into an Empire under French protection.

my prejudice, with which I felt I was fully armed. At a gala performance in the theatre, I saw her for a few minutes in a very poor light, but still I came to the conclusion that it was quite worth while to study her appearance more closely. When I met her yesterday in the hall of the Embassy, simply dressed, wearing her hat, and speaking Spanish, her features lighted up, and fingers, fan, and little feet all in animated movement as she talked, I lay down my arms on the spot; I lost the battle at the first onslaught! Yes, she is beautiful, more lovely than words can express. And how sparkling she was at the banquet that evening!

“I did not sit opposite to her; that seat was occupied by the Queen of Spain; but still I was placed so that I could see her well. The lady by my side, the wife of an ambassador, an Englishwoman by birth, the mother of grown-up children, and of perfectly correct morals, who had frequently seen the Empress five or six years ago, told me that she is now even far more lovely than she was then. She was simply enraptured with her, and exclaimed with enthusiasm, ‘Does she not deserve a throne, if only for her beauty?’

“The Empress is of middle height, not so tall as her portrait led me to suppose, slight and supple, but at the same time comely. She has the figure of a girl, the very model of a Hebe. Her bust, neck, shoulders, arms, and especially

her hands, are incomparably beautiful, and she has the grace of an Andalusian *danseuse*.

“But, to gain the very best impression of her, one must hear her converse in Spanish. On account of her Scotch descent, she naturally speaks English like her mother-tongue, and she is perfectly fluent in French; but these two languages she speaks with her mouth only. She was talking to the King with great animation, and eyes, mouth, hands, and especially her pretty fingers, seemed to be equally expressive, and to impart to her words the very essence of their meaning and importance. How completely she put the good Queen into the shade this evening! Isabella is three or four years her junior, but how terribly Bourbon she looked! After coffee, an informal reception was held in the royal drawing-room, when their Majesties simply bowed to most of the guests and exchanged a few words with one here and there as they stood in rows or groups. The Queen dragged herself from one to the other, nodding and smiling in her usual friendly manner; Eugénie, on the contrary, flitted from one to another, going up close, almost affectionately, to some, and chatting in the most winsome way. But the contrast was the most apparent when they took leave and turned to bow to the guests. The Queen set her whole body in motion, and nodded her head as familiarly as any citizen's wife; but Eugénie turned towards them in all her graceful charm, placed her feet firmly, and

then stood bending the upper part of her body back and bringing it forward again, with the easiest, prettiest movement from side to side, like a swan curving its neck: then, without turning, she slowly withdrew backwards to the doorway. In this way she copied to perfection the wonderful swaying movement of the upper part of the body in which the Andalusian *danseuses* are inimitable.¹

“And then her dress! The ladies contemplated it in silent awe, and even grave diplomatists were in raptures about the arrangement and adorning of her hair. Perhaps for an Empress she was too much of a coquette, but as an Andalusian, which she is, and looked upon simply as a woman, she was the most perfect creation I have seen anywhere”²

But it was not only in Spain, her native land, that all hearts went out to Eugénie. It did not

¹ Eugénie's *réverence circulaire*, as the Court used to call this single bow, combined with the one smiling glance, in which she included all who were present, was one of the Empress's social triumphs, and never failed to excite admiration.

² The American Ambassador, whose opinions I have quoted, closes his account by describing the impression made upon him by the mother of the Empress on this same occasion:—

“Opposite to her daughter, one seat removed from the Queen, sat the Countess Montijo, by the side of the Papal Legate. I had, of course, met her before, but not with the same facility of studying her. Although she is far on in the sixties, it is easy to see that she must have been quite as beautiful, if not more lovely than Eugénie or her other daughter, the deceased Duchess of Alba, who, to judge from her portraits, must have been exceptionally attractive. She has probably been taller, as she generally stoops a little, but

matter if it was a benevolent visit or an Imperial meeting, a journey abroad or the opening of an Exhibition; she invariably upheld the power of the Empire with dignity, and it was no longer possible for anybody to deny that she was brilliantly gifted to play a chief part on the stage of the world.

Upon the whole, her popularity was never more firmly rooted than about the middle of the sixties, and her great goodness of heart certainly never appeared in a more favourable light than then. She took the initiative in several excellent reforms while the Emperor was absent in Algiers during the summer of 1865, and she was at the head of the Government; it was then that she busied herself in bringing about improvement in the condition of children under punishment.

to-day she was erect in her proud dignity. I saw that when she had taken her seat at table she seemed to forget her surroundings, and to be sunk in contemplation of her daughter, who was placed between the King and the Infant Sebastian. Her right hand mechanically clasped the good-sized roll that was in front of her, and before the soup was served she began to munch it, unbroken, to my great amusement. I am certain that she never had the least conception what she was eating or drinking. When I accosted her after dinner, and remarked how enviable her lot was, she pressed both my hands with a warmth and a radiancy of expression incredible in such a woman of the world, who, from being the daughter of a Scotch tradesman, has raised herself to the rank of Countess, who has given one daughter to an Emperor, not as a mistress, but as a wife, and whose other daughter was married to one of the highest *grandeės* of the kingdom."

Accompanied by the Prefect of Police, she personally inspected the prison "La Petite Roquette," where the inmates were suffering cruelly. As the building was originally intended for the reception of children who were more neglected than criminal, in order to obviate companionship with these latter, a system of cells had been arranged which prevented them from seeing each other. Even the gloomy courtyard was partitioned by insurmountable walls; and here these five hundred miserable creatures were to be seen, one by one, crouching like wild animals in a cage, with bent heads and an imbecile expression.

The motherly heart of the Empress was touched at the sight of the sufferings of the children. She appointed a Commission with power to reform such an abominable system, and at the meetings which were held in the Tuileries, she espoused the cause of these unfortunate little ones with convincing zeal.

One of the members of the Commission observed: "That is quite true, Madame, but there are so many difficulties in carrying out any plan that there seems to be no means of help; and to talk about it is simply to stir up the emotions."

"Excuse me," answered Eugénie gently, "this is a matter of philanthropy, not of politics."

At last she carried her point that the young prisoners in La Roquette should be sent into the country to reformatories, where they would be taught to work in the fields. The managers were anxious about these new-comers, as they were afraid they would contaminate the other children, who were already under good training. But results proved the advantage of the Empress's arrangements; for even the worst, most hardened characters improved under the influence of milder treatment and healthy work in the fresh air.

Another charitable act was the visit of the Regent to "St. Lazare."¹ The report that Eugénie had visited this prison spread like wild-fire through the city, and on leaving the poor abandoned creatures detained there, she was greeted with the most touching marks of the devotion of the people towards her. Blessings were showered upon her as she stepped out into the street, women knelt and tried to seize her hands and kiss her

¹ St. Lazare is a house of correction for women of ill-fame, and female criminals generally, in Paris.

dress, while many held up their little ones to look at her.¹

The absence of fear and the self-sacrificing courage which the Empress displayed when the cholera broke out, gained her the approbation of the world at large, while the loyal French papers could not find words of praise strong enough for their Empress; and even the members of the press who generally wrote coolly about her were proud of Eugénie, the "Sister of Mercy." The cholera broke out towards the close of September, 1865. The Court, then at Biarritz, determined to return home at once, for the recollection of the terrible

¹ The Empress, who was so bright and lively in daily life, could speak with such seriousness on these occasions, and was so penetrated with the power of religion, that her hearers could not fail to be impressed. An unhappy girl was lying at the point of death at St. Lazare. Her life had been so wretched, so full of sorrow, that religion had no influence over her. "Let me alone," she cried; "there is no God. I cannot suffer more in hell than I have done upon earth." Eugénie went to her, and spoke simply, but eagerly and earnestly, and she seemed moved. "How is it?" she said; "you are the Empress! And you, who are so beautiful, so rich, and so happy, take an interest in an outcast like me, and seem troubled because I suffer. It must be true then that there is a good God, as you have such a kind heart." And the girl became calm, asked pardon of the Sisters of Mercy and of the nurses, and begged one of the nuns to lend her a rosary, which she raised to her poor distorted face by the help of the Empress. She asked for a priest, in order to make her confession, after which she felt comforted, and prayed herself to God for mercy.

epidemic of 1849 loomed upon France like an appalling spectre.

The first outbreak was alarming, and then the scourge seemed gradually to lessen in intensity; but in the second half of October it returned with renewed force, and the inhabitants were simply panic-stricken.

On October 21st the Emperor paid a long visit to one of the cholera hospitals, and on leaving he gave 50,000 francs for the use of the unfortunate victims of the epidemic. The Empress, who was unaware of her husband's intentions, expressed her regret that she did not accompany him.

"I thought you would have liked to go with me," answered Napoleon; "but you have too bad a cold to go out, and for that reason I did not name it to you."

The following morning the Empress drove into the capital from St. Cloud, and visited the cholera hospitals of Beaujon, Lariboisière, and St. Antoine, going from bed to bed, speaking words of comfort, and inspiring the patients with hope. It was in the Beaujon Hospital that she took the hands of a dying man within her own, and addressed him in words of tender sympathy. He thought it was one of the nursing

sisters who was talking to him, and struggled to kiss her hand, though his strength was ebbing fast.

"Thank you, sister," he murmured.

The nurse who had followed the Empress bent over him and said :

"You are mistaken, my friend ; it is not I, it is our good Empress who is talking to you."

"Never mind, sister," said the Empress quickly ; "he could not have given me a prettier name."

This reply, one of the best-known sayings of Eugénie, became, like one of her remarks during the war,¹ a current expression in France.

The cholera raged terribly in Amiens during the summer of 1866, and Eugénie hastened to the city whose terror-stricken wealthy inhabitants had fled. "I am not sure," says Mérimée,² "that this is very prudent, but it is praiseworthy. With reference to hindering her action on such occasions, you know as well as I do that it is not to be thought of. If we presume to talk to her of danger, she will only expose herself to it all the more."

Without a moment's reflection, she hastened

¹ "One can never feel unhappy in France."

² *Lettres à Panizzi* (July 5th, 1866).

again and again to every hospital, where her simple presence seemed to alleviate suffering and to subdue the groans of the dying. She visited the dwellings of the poor, and developed a zeal which seemed to know no bounds. The proud modesty of her reply to one of the Imperial generals, who had expressed his admiration of her courage, is striking. "Sir," she said, responding to his politeness with a pretty compliment, "we are neither of us afraid of fire."

It required, in truth, unusual courage to visit plague-stricken hospitals, not of the romantic kind which she exhibited in her youth, but a calm, well-balanced, self-denying courage. It was not to gain the applause of the crowd that she drew near to all this wretchedness and misery, to this loathsome, revolting sickness. She was filled with sympathy with the poor creatures, and longed to help them. And nobody who remembers her devotion during this epidemic can name the name of Eugénie without feelings of esteem.

CHAPTER XIII.

EUGÉNIE AS A LEADER OF FASHION.

THE fearlessness and magnanimity of the Empress during the cholera epidemic had roused the affection of the people towards her for one brief moment, but angry voices were soon heard again complaining of her bigotry, which the majority hated, and, moreover, sharply censuring her extravagance and love of novelty, which were rapidly spreading from the Court all over the capital to the provinces.

It would be an injustice to ascribe all the hankering of the Parisians after pleasure, all their selfishness and levity, to the influence of Eugénie; but it cannot be denied that the luxury which she displayed and the foolish changes of style which she encouraged were most pernicious. The power which she exercised as queen of fashion, the feverish love of dress which, engendered by her as their leader, carried away the lowest as well as the highest classes, had

a baneful and serious effect upon the people. This craving for display, this empty show and hollow appearance, which had its rise in the Palace of the Tuileries, gradually infected every home in France.

Eugénie could not bear the comparative inactivity to which her sex and position of sovereign condemned her, and neither heart nor mind were satisfied with her *great* tasks, which led her to seek minor details. To gratify her vanity was the enjoyment of her life; luxury and display were her element. Love of society and ceaseless extravagance in fashion wasted her energies and weakened her best mental powers.

But although she was far from blameless for the tone of society, the times and circumstances under which she lived have also their share of responsibility.

Fashion is always a mirror of a period, its tastes and interests, which connect it with contemporary history. It is the spontaneous product of industry called into being by the arbitrariness of women of influence. They can lead it, but the spirit and circumstances of the age stamp it with their own impression.

Social life in the reign of Napoleon III. was marked by a feverish craving to get on,

and to rise higher than the position of one's birth was the aim and object of the majority. Circumstances had been very different. Class distinctions had kept every man within his own prescribed boundary, and that one which it would have been intensely difficult to overstep. But under the Second Empire energy and promptness led on to the most ambitious hopes, if they could attract the attention of Napoleon, and mediocrity alone was a bar to promotion.

But as we all—it is innate in human nature—are disposed to think of ourselves as more or less important beings, everyone entered the lists and tried to rise. And this race, in conjunction with class pride, explains the constraining power which fashion has never exercised more strongly than during the Second Empire in France.

The middle classes meant to raise themselves, and quickly adopted the style of the circle above them. The lower strata would not allow themselves to be outstripped, and followed closely on the heels of their betters; while, with the very evident object of protecting themselves against these changes, the higher classes continually and rapidly altered their style; but the gain upon their imitators was very slight, and

fashion rolled ever on and on, like a wheel. All who wished to rank with good society had to follow it, even if they thought it hideous. They slavishly bore the yoke of a tyrant who proved to be no gentle mistress, and that without a murmur.

If the lower classes, who were foolish enough to imitate the Empress and her Court in things both great and small, had not aimed at passing for more than they really were, they would not only have preserved their own self-respect and dignity more effectively, but fashion would have lost much of her power.

Under existing circumstances, the millions squandered by Eugénie produced far more of a curse than a blessing. The frivolity of the Court permeated every stratum of the people, and the thoughtless dalliance with trifles weakened the power of France.

And yet it cannot be denied that there were some who benefited by the interest of the Empress in fashion. It furthered trade, industry, and handiwork, which created activity and well-being among the middle classes, and those who had been complaining of want of work were now fully occupied.

It would take far too much time to name

one-half of the bygone styles created by Eugénie, which affected not only the toilet, but every item of domestic and social life. But, in order to give a faint conception of the influence which she had, I will for a moment interrupt the narrative of her life, and follow her exclusively as a ruler in the domain of fashion.

We have seen that in her early youth she was fond of originating startling costumes, and that in Compiègne she elicited quite as much admiration on account of her uncommon riding hat and habit, as by her beauty. In Madrid people had been content to envy her; not one had dared to adopt her extravagant styles. It was otherwise at the watering-places which she afterwards frequented, where clumsy imitations of the "original Spaniard" were not unfrequently to be seen on the promenade, at the gaming tables, or in the salons of the hotels.

Her influence in Paris was apparent on her arrival; and even before it was suspected that she was to be raised to the Imperial throne, French ladies had adopted the high-heeled boots similar to those she had worn at the Emperor's hunting party, and even before her name was generally known, the waistcoat which she so

often wore, was copied and sold in the shops of fashionable tailors. There were, however, a few among the more sober-minded Parisians who thought that the new Empress was certainly elegant and attractive, but not exceptionally brilliant or dazzling in her beauty,¹ though there was one feature that was universally admired from the very beginning: her lovely, glossy, richly coloured hair.

Waistcoats and riding boots could be imitated, but how could similarity of hair be achieved? The coiffeurs did their best to produce the right tinge by means of dyes, and bought up snippings of hair in search of the shade that resembled that of the Empress; they exhibited wigs, tresses, and plaits in their windows, and false hair became the fashion.

Chignons and Eugénie curls were sold by the thousand, and ladies were continually to be seen with hair resembling hers, and false tresses spread from France to the whole of Europe, where, to the mortification of the ladies, duchesses and milkmaids adopted the same style.

But, side by side with the Empress's lovely hair, her sweet smile and half-open mouth were

¹ *Le Journal des Débats.*

bewitching; so it became the fashion to open the mouth! But there were few Parisians who could equal the double row of pearly teeth that was to be seen when Eugénie smiled; it was unfortunately a deep yellow, sometimes a brownish-black, row that was visible, which did not embellish the smile as they had expected. But help was again forthcoming, and the reign of false teeth was at hand.

The beautiful bright eyes of the Empress and also her wonderfully clear, fresh complexion excited admiration; and, in order to resemble their divinity, first the ladies of the Court, later on the middle classes, tried to enhance the beauty of their skin with paint and powder, to darken their eyebrows with cosmetics, and to give unnatural brilliancy to their eyes by the use of belladonna. And because Her Majesty, according to Spanish custom, pencilled her eyelashes black, the French ladies must needs be tempted to do the same.

But, strictly speaking, Eugénie had only indirectly influenced *these* extravagances of style, though in all other respects she had no sooner ascended the throne than she grasped the sceptre of fashion with her tiny hand. She was Empress of France, but, at the same time, the ruling

costumière of the country; and before she left her room each morning to attend mass, she had devoted, as we observed in a previous chapter, at least an hour or two to the development of new, conspicuous, or becoming costumes.

The Empress's bedroom, which was close to the oratory, was very different from her other apartments, inasmuch that it was bare of all personal impressions. The bed, which was hung with costly draperies, stood on a *daïs*, and looked like a throne. It was in this room that she kept the Golden Rose presented to her by the Pope, and at the bed's head was the sacred palm which the Holy Father annually gave her with his blessing. The Empress never entered this room during the day, but she spent so much the more time in the adjoining dressing-room, which was furnished with large revolving mirrors, by the help of which she could see herself on all sides. In the upper storey, and connected with her private rooms by means of speaking-tubes and a lift, were the apartments occupied by her female attendants, which resembled shops in their stores of silks, velvets, ready-made gowns, and every imaginable detail of the wardrobe. Gowns and cloaks of every possible make and colour were kept in huge presses piled up against

the walls; and there were separate rooms for hats and bonnets, for boots and shoes, for sunshades and dust-cloaks, etc., etc.

In one of the rooms the Empress had introduced life-size "dolls," which in every minute detail were dressed like living women, whose height and development corresponded exactly with Her Majesty's own figure; and these dolls which were fully clothed every single morning, were sent down by the lift and exhibited before her. In spite of the care taken by the dress-makers and tailors in order to please her, it was a rare occurrence for a gown to satisfy her entirely. She criticised, altered, and rejected incessantly, until she finally succeeded in recomposing the whole thing to her satisfaction.

As a girl Eugénie had devoted a short time to art studies, and could paint prettily. This knowledge was useful to her now, when she made dress a perfect study, and the details of fashion under her direction approached nearer and nearer to the domain of art.

One revolution which she quickly brought about, and which accorded well with her feelings of dignity as an Empress, was the introduction of trained skirts, which was adopted without regard to position or occupation. In

ancient times the train had swept the salons of a Court; now it swept the streets and the floors of the lower classes.

Before her accession to the throne helpless womanhood was in favour, but when it became fashionable to copy the Empress this was discarded. She introduced stiff cuffs and collars, besides numerous trifles that savoured of emancipation, while dress as a whole bore a masculine stamp under her rule, and the daring horsewoman encouraged a manly bearing that was suddenly discovered to be extremely becoming.

The Crimean war broke out, and was the means of bringing Eastern shawls into vogue again. They had been fashionable during the First Empire, and the Empress Josephine had been especially fond of their wear. But they were costly, and as every woman craved for one, the French manufacturers imitated the real article in common material and provided an enormous stock, which was soon dispersed to every hamlet in Europe, where the wife of the farmer or the national schoolmaster, as well as Her Grace the Duchess, felt it a kind of duty to make their way to church enveloped in a shawl.

We have already alluded to the first Exhibition

in Paris (1855), when all that was new, beautiful, practical, or original was collected from foreign lands all over the world, to be seen, admired, or tested.

But the French department far outshone all others, and Eugénie was much too proud and patriotic not to encourage and bring forward all that belonged to France, while the exhibitors, on their side, were thorough men of business, who did their utmost to secure her approbation. It had long been the fashion to christen baby-girls after her, and to call benevolent institutions by her name; now the manufacturers affixed "Eugénie" to their wares. If they could once gain her favour their fortune was made, for she never found a price too high, and whatever she purchased became at once the fashion. But nothing, not even the suitable and the beautiful, could survive the craving for still newer fancies, and the styles that pleased during the Exhibition had speedily to yield to others, while immediately after its close, a memorable change took place in the dress of every woman.

Eugénie was expecting to become a mother, and she invented the crinoline, some maintained, in order to conceal her condition, while others declared that it was to render it all the more

conspicuous. We are so accustomed to look upon her as the creator of the crinoline, that we are apt to overlook the fact that it was merely a new form of hoop petticoat which played a part in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. It appeared first in Spain in the middle of the sixteenth century, from whence it spread to other lands. We see from her portraits that Elizabeth, the great Queen of England, wore one; and Margaret of Valois, the lovely wife of Henri IV., was reproached with wearing her hoop petticoat so large that no door was wide enough to admit her. It appeared again at the close of the seventeenth century, this time in France, but of no stereotyped shape; and it continued in vogue for a long time, as Marie Antoinette amused herself as a shepherdess at St. Cloud and Trianon with powdered hair and a hoop petticoat. It was the Great Revolution that abolished it, with so many other things.

Eugénie renewed the fashion under a new name, and in an original, more complete form. It is certain that the hoop petticoat, or crinoline as it was now called, never played such a part, never attained to such perfection, or became so universally adopted, as during the Second Empire.

The crinoline marks an epoch in the history

of fashion. It had many enemies, but it subdued them all. It was condemned, and with good reason, as ungraceful, dangerous, and useless. It brought misfortune to many: catching the foot in the steels of the crinoline occasioned many a serious fall, and numbers of ballet-dancers, and even ladies at balls, had to thank their crinoline for burns, or even loss of life.

Then it was as unpractical as it was dangerous. Its proper place was in large rooms with plenty of space; and introduced as it was for the aristocracy, with servants to open folding-doors and pages or courtiers to arrange their seats, it ought never to have found a home among the lower classes. In small rooms, amid household duties, it was simply an encumbrance, which contributed to loss of temper, as well as to ruin of clothes.

It was not really ungraceful when first introduced by Eugénie, and even its opponents were of opinion that it might be useful to disguise bodily defects. But its grace was rapidly a thing of the past, and the crinoline soon assumed preposterous, almost incredible dimensions.

The elder generation will remember that it travelled from Paris to every corner of the

globe, and that from moderate proportions it grew and grew, till it became a balloon, which hindered a husband from walking by the side of his wife, and necessitated the occupation of an entire sofa when the lady wished to sit down !

Although many a woman looked back regretfully to the reign of slimness, not one escaped the vortex of the crinoline. They had to be clothed, a crinoline was essential, and as very few women of the middle classes had time for frequent change of dress, there was nothing to be done but to wear it, no matter what might be the business on hand.

Many indeed were the trials of the fair sex under this "petticoat government," boundless the time and thought it required, and countless the annoyances produced by this inseparable companion. But *very* few ever thought of relinquishing it, for it would have required strong moral courage to meet the ridicule of men, the contemptuous shrug of the shoulders of women, and the jeering shouts of the *gamins* at the sight of a female without a crinoline. Even the "slavey" of either town or country was rarely to be seen with brush and broom without one ; and however scanty and precarious her remaining upper and under clothing might be, she always

contrived to provide herself with this necessary garment.

Innumerable alterations and improvements were made in the crinoline, mainly at the suggestion of the Empress. A sort of whalebone cage succeeded to the first horsehair skirt, and later on cane or steel bands were introduced, after which an attempt was made to replace everything else by India-rubber tubes inflated with air. But although this last invention tended to idealise the crinoline, it rendered it perfectly powerless to resist the puffs and blows of chance. An air-skirt proved therefore an abortive attempt. Horsehair offered too slight a resistance to the gown, whalebone was too brittle, and cane was too heavy. The making of crinolines received an incredible impetus in the sixties, and brought riches to many a manufacturer, for the fact must be grasped that in order to publish his gratitude, one maker in London offered a prize of one hundred guineas for the best poem in praise of the crinoline.

This great power ruled the world for nearly ten years, and when it finally and reluctantly disappeared, the reign of Eugénie herself as sovereign was nearly completed.

While the crinoline was, so to speak, ruling

the world of fashion, the real motive power was far from idle, but continually occupied in finding out "some new thing." As the seasons came round, she conferred with her *modistes*, who were prepared with stuffs and models of every description, from which she selected the styles that she meant to adopt. She had countless conferences with Madame Virot, the Court milliner, and with Worth, whose career she made. He frequently sent her gowns that cost 100,000 or 200,000 francs, and made Her Majesty pay as much as 50,000 francs for a simple little cloak. But even his works of art, offered at such exorbitant prices, did not content her in their original form; they had to be altered again and again, according to her directions, until her own correct taste, which became more and more developed by repeated practice, succeeded in producing a perfectly harmonious effect.

And some of her inventions were far from unpractical. I will simply recall the Garibaldi blouse; the useful *en-tout-cas*, between a parasol and an umbrella; and coloured under-skirts, blue and red especially, which she herself wore, and thus set the fashion to both high and low. In every country hamlet, the maidens, who had considered it impossible, even in the depth of

winter, to go out in their best, except with a starched white petticoat, reverted to a better style when the Empress of the French led the way.

Among numerous other inventions, the nets called in Paris *invisibles*, deserve to be mentioned. They were made of hair, and used to keep the coiffure neat and tidy. It became the custom to have such nets made of one's own hair, to be presented as gifts to friends, when the colour was suitable.

The kind-heartedness of the Empress, evident on so many occasions, was also shown in the domain of fashion. Early in the sixties the silk manufacturers of Lyons had been on the verge of bankruptcy, because there was no sale for their large-patterned goods. They appealed to the Empress with a petition that she would bring them into fashion, and she at once acceded to their request.

Violets had, of course, an important place during the reign of Eugénie. The emblem of the Napoleons was to be seen on all sides on hats and evening gowns, while the colour long remained a favourite. *Extrait de violettes* was the fashionable perfume; and as "a lady of high degree" always uses a distinct scent that affects

her surroundings, as the middle classes and even the shady members of the demi-monde favoured this *extrait de violettes*, its perfume was wafted towards one from every corner during the days of the Empire.

It would be a tedious task to recall every change of fashion brought into vogue by Eugénie, but I will just mention the becoming fancy dress that she had made on the occasion of her visit to Suez (1869), which resembled the uniform of a naval officer, and that she introduced the *bernouse* on her return from Egypt. The following winter, her last at the Tuileries, *eau de Nil* became the prevailing colour. It is described in a *Journal de Modes* of the day as "an artistic blending of green and grey with a wonderful silver sheen," and a gown of this shade was said to resemble "the ripple of the Nile in moonlight."

This was the last novelty she introduced as ruler in France, but the ex-Empress has exerted no unimportant influence by being the first to cut her hair short. The fashion was adopted by the young, and then copied by the elder ladies, though very few of those who, until quite recently, have worn these "fringes" are aware that they owe the style to the former Empress

of the French; and of these a still smaller minority know that what vanity has led them to imitate, was worn by her as a sign of her sorrowful widowhood.

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The remembrance of the beautiful Spaniard will always be closely associated with her zeal as supreme ruler in the realm of fashion. This dominant interest of her life proved at once her weakness and her strength: her weakness, because the love of dress and extravagance with which French society has reproached their former Empress is fully justified; her strength, because the skill which she displayed in asserting herself, and the coquettish arts which she used to bewitch and captivate, all assured her position among the people of the day.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN AND THE EMPRESS
CHARLOTTE—EXHIBITION OF 1867—DECLINE
OF THE EMPIRE—EUGÉNIE'S LAST TRIUMPH.

WHILE dwelling in our last chapter on the influence of Eugénie in the world of fashion, our subject led us to follow her into the days of her widowhood. But in the meantime her power was at its height, and the Empire had apparently lost none of its full noontide brilliancy.

Apparently! One *fête* followed closely on another, and royal visitors arrived in rapid succession. France thought herself invincible, and the Empress looked upon her position as assured for life, as well as for her descendants.

But the Emperor's policy met with a crushing rebuff, and anxious rumours were whispered from the insecure Mexican Empire which he had created.

Maximilian and Charlotte had been frequent guests at the Tuileries in the happy days of their freedom, and it was Napoleon who urged

the Austrian Archduke to accept the fatal crown, with the solemn promise that he would not forsake him until his throne was firmly secured.

Mindful of this assurance, the unfortunate Emperor sent his wife to Europe with an appeal for help. She arrived in Paris late one evening, and, without allowing herself any rest after the tedious voyage, she hastened the following day to St. Cloud (August 24th, 1866), looking untidy, heated, and exhausted.

She brought letters with her in which Napoleon had promised not to abandon her husband in his need, and forced him to read them as she knelt in the dust at his feet, and entreated him to fulfil his vow. But the Emperor was cold to her tears and prayers. He was no longer *able* to help her, even if he had had the will. It is said that, choked with sobs and almost beside herself, Charlotte exclaimed: "The granddaughter of Louis Philippe ought never to have entrusted her fate to a Bonaparte!" And it is also said that she left St. Cloud with a curse on her lips.¹

But although the failure of Napoleon's policy had begun to tarnish the glory which had sur-

¹ It was observed that her mind seemed to give way the day following this interview; and after she had knelt in vain at the feet of the Pope, who refused the assistance she craved for, her madness broke out in all its violence.

rounded him after the Crimean War, although an important crisis in the history of the world¹ had occurred without his intervention, some later acts were looked upon as far from fair and honourable in the eyes of the majority of men.

April 1st, 1867, witnessed the opening of a second Exhibition in Paris, when crowds again assembled from every European kingdom and every corner of the globe in the Imperial city on the Seine, and the Prefect proclaimed with pardonable pride that the capital of the French had become *l'auberge du monde*. Never was more magnificent hospitality offered in France. There is not an epoch in her history, not under the brilliant reign of Louis XIV., nor even during the sovereignty of Napoleon I., when such a concourse of crowned heads visited the French Court, and the most exclusive princes, the proudest princesses, vied with each other in expressing their friendship for the "*parvenu* and the adventuress." Eugénie received all these high-born guests with inimitable grace and admirable tact, especially when she had to act hostess to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia at the same moment.

¹ The wars between Denmark and Germany 1864, and between Prussia and Austria 1866.

The attempt on the life of the Czar has caused history to preserve the recollection of the grand imposing spectacle of the review of the troops, which was held in honour of these two "equally considered" rulers, June 7th, 1867.¹

Countless thousands of spectators formed a living wall round the course of Longchamps, where uniforms, gleaming weapons, and flags of all colours shone brightly in the sun. The guests had all arrived and taken their seats, among whom were the Crown Princess of Prussia and her sister, Princess Alice of Hesse, but no one heeded these. All anxiety and expectation was concentrated on the Empress, whose coming was eagerly looked for. Then a shout was heard from all sides: "The Empress is here!" And bright, gratified, smiling, and bowing, Eugénie drove through the densely packed, jubilant ranks of men, round the great course, on her way to the Imperial grand stand. The sovereigns, all on horseback, quickly appeared,

¹ As the Imperial and Royal personages were leaving the review, about five o'clock in the afternoon, the two Emperors were in the first carriage, followed by Eugénie and the King of Prussia in a second. A Pole, Berezowski, rushed forward and fired a pistol at the Emperor Alexander. Napoleon's Master of the Horse, Raimbeaux, threw himself between them, and saved the monarch's life, while Napoleon stood up in the carriage and shouted that nobody was hurt.

followed by the German Crown Prince and the heir to the throne of Russia. The interminable ranks of soldiers presented arms, and greeted their Majesties with the deafening blare of trumpets.

Eugénie occupied the seat of honour on the Imperial stand as she gazed with proud and satisfied eyes on this brilliant assemblage of soldiers, the flower of the French army, and on the dense crowd, untiring in their jubilant shouts, and yet again on the representatives of the Imperial and Royal houses of Europe.

The monarchs rode up to where she was sitting, and Alexander of Russia and William the Great of Prussia kissed her hand; the granddaughter of the tradesman Kirkpatrick, the daughter of the frivolous Manuela Montijo, received before the eyes of the French people the most respectful homage of the mightiest princes in Europe. She was proud, and with good cause!

This review of the troops at Longchamps was one of the last of those magnificent picturesque scenes with which the Second Empire was wont to astonish the world, though for Eugénie it was far from being the only bright spot of the season.

Three weeks later brought other festivities, when the prizes of the "Exposition Universelle" were to be distributed by the Prince Imperial, as President. Among the distinguished guests were the Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Crown Prince of Italy, the Duke of Aosta, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, the Sultan Abdul Aziz, his son, and his nephews. The followers of Christianity and Mahomedanism were to be seen "at one," all keen upon enjoyment, seated on the same richly decorated stand, the bigoted Empress side by side with the Sultan, who was ignorant of French, but whose looks remained riveted upon her as they spoke the most distinct language of admiration. In her confident blindness, Eugénie considered herself on the very summit of greatness. But the ground had already begun to glide from under her feet, and Napoleon had that very day received the news of the cruel death of Maximilian, and the unceasing shouts of applause on this prize-giving day were powerless to drown the death-rattle which surged towards him in warning tones from distant Queretaro.

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A very strong and conspicuous characteristic

of Napoleon was his unshaken faith in a pre-ordained, inevitable destiny, and it was this fatalist belief which had given him nerve and energy to concentrate his will and direct his astute calculations when he was determined to win the throne of France. It was also the main-spring of his cool personal courage, for he was convinced that no bullet could touch him unless such was the decree of fate.

But while his superstition fostered his indifference to danger, it produced at the same time the fatal indecision that was apparent in the policy of his later years. He tried by every conceivable means to lift the veil of the future, and there was not a single fortune-teller of any note whom he did not consult, and whose predictions did not influence him, incredible as this may seem. Several prophecies had foretold, ever before he ascended the throne, that Germany would prove his ruin.¹ And it was for this reason that he could never make up his mind either to oppose or promote national unity in this country. He had encouraged the war be-

¹ There is a prediction extant by the celebrated fortune-teller Madame Lenormand (printed 1841) in which she foretells with the strongest conviction that a second empire will arise, that it will fall by the advent of the Germans into France, and that Paris will be destroyed by fire and bloodshed.

tween Austria and Prussia in the hope that it would weaken both powers, and that he himself would enjoy the "chestnuts" snatched from the fire. But after the unexpected victories of Prussia he was again helpless and vacillating, without the courage necessary to adopt a decided course.

The growing power of Prussia was a source of alarm to Napoleon, and of ferment and disturbance among his people, whose loyalty began to waver. He tried to enter into fresh diplomatic relationships, but it was as if the hand of fate, which in the beginning of his reign had guided him to victory and triumph, had granted him nothing but incessant difficulties and disappointed hopes since the fall of the Mexican Empire.

After the return of the Empress and the Prince Imperial from Corsica in August, 1867, where they had been to take part in the *fêtes* commemorating the centenary of Napoleon I., Napoleon and Eugénie proceeded to Salzburg to meet the Emperor and Empress of Austria, ostensibly to condole with them on the sorrowful fate of Maximilian, but in reality for purely political reasons.

Their Majesties, who had so recently shown

such magnificent hospitality, were naturally received with cordiality throughout the journey, though the personal wishes of the Emperor were not destined to be fulfilled. It had always been the aim of the policy of Napoleon III. to play the part of "guardian" over the Latin races; and it was therefore a cruel blow to him when Isabella of Spain, who had sought his alliance, was driven from her throne just as he was on the eve of arranging a meeting with her.

She fled to Paris, where she was kindly received by Eugénie, who had once been her subject, and who still continued to address her as "Ma Souveraine." Royal honours were paid to her; and her son, afterwards King Alphonso, became the daily playmate of the Prince Imperial.

But the revolution on the other side of the Pyrenees found a responsive echo in France, where threatening clouds were beginning to darken the horizon; and though they appeared to disperse, Napoleon saw himself compelled to relax the reins of his government.

In order to appease the public, who, as we have noticed, were displeased at the concessions to the Clerical party, he had already yielded on

some points in the early years of the sixties. This first step was followed by others, opposition increased in strength; and when he was induced to modify the laws of the press (1867), the position became worse instead of better, and the waves of the Revolution rose higher and higher after the first publication of Henri de Rochefort's *Lanterne* in 1868.

In the emphatic language of a *gamin*, Rochefort poured forth torrents of gall and venom against the Tuileries. - He attacked the Emperor in coarse terms both as a man and a ruler, sullied Eugénie with the basest of insinuations, and even made the Imperial child the butt of his shameful wit. Although it is said that he was never in earnest, he inflicted many a serious wound on the cause of Imperialism.

The democratic Marquis exercised a magnetic influence over the lower orders in Paris at the close of the sixties, and his scandalous paper was being sold by hundreds of thousands. Nearly every evening the cry of "Vive la *Lanterne*" was to be heard shouted by the rabble, and it was no uncommon occurrence for the newspaper kiosks to be ransacked and the street lamps broken to pieces by the blind

enthusiasts who longed for the Republic which seemed to be no distant possibility.

Errors in foreign policy were neither calculated to calm men's minds nor to allay the anxious forebodings of the Emperor, who, in addition, was a prey to physical suffering, the severity of which led to the suggestion that the Prince Imperial should be declared of age before the usual time.

Then the popularity of the Empress was on the wane, for even among the middle classes, who had formed her strongest support, many serious complaints were heard against her. It is well known that Eugénie's distant cousin, the unfortunate Ferdinand de Lesseps, was the originator of the Suez Canal. A seven years' residence in Egypt first gave the idea to which he devoted untiring energy for years, and *his* name will be connected with the undertaking for ever. But the fact will be forgotten that it was a woman who encouraged him without intermission; that it was the enthusiasm of Eugénie which smoothed his path, and her zeal that roused him to the work. But the scheme was not prospering very well at this juncture, and just before the opening of the Canal rumours were current that it would hardly be navigable

for large vessels. Shares fell, and the fickle French people were ready to hold the Empress, who had promoted the company, responsible for the possible loss of the individual.

It was no longer "Vive l'Impératrice!" the moment she appeared, but ill-omened silence; and she even became so thoroughly unpopular, that she found it advisable to occupy the back seat of her box when she visited the theatre.

Her wish to be present at the opening of the Suez Canal simply added fuel to the flames, especially as it was announced one day by telegram from London that Napoleon had borrowed 10,000,000 francs from English bankers in order to defray her expenses. The message was untrue, and the Government papers assured the people in contradiction that the journey would only cost 700,000 francs, the whole of which would be forthcoming from the Emperor's civil list. But they did not, or would not, believe, and the Radical press eagerly spread the false report with exaggerations and hateful additions, and gave themselves infinite trouble to persecute the Empress on account of the enormous sums which they accused her of squandering.

In the meantime the preparations that were made by those who hoped to receive her far

exceeded those on her side, and the only thought was how to welcome their beautiful guest in an adequate manner. The festivities that were arranged were so splendid, that now, when her throne has crumbled away, it is quite worth the trouble to cast a glance back, and contemplate the homage paid to her so shortly before her fall.

Illuminations were arranged in Venice, where the Imperial yacht, the *Aigle*, touched first, and Eugénie was welcomed by the royal family of Italy, while several hundred singers gave her a serenade from their gondolas on the Grand Canal.

A still more flattering attention awaited her at Athens when it was voted in the House that the time which the Empress spent in Greece should be considered a national holiday. But the preparations in Turkey surpassed those of every other country. The main streets were paved, and new roads constructed, while, in order to widen some of the thoroughfares along which Her Majesty was to pass, numbers of houses were pulled down. An army of 20,000 men was placed under canvas in her honour, and close to the camp was erected a magnificent kiosk. Ladies of rank had to practise their curtseys months beforehand and learn to walk with high-heeled boots. Then a splendid litter was made

for her use at a cost of 200,000 francs, as well as a gala caique unique in costliness and magnificence.¹

As the Empress neared Constantinople (October 30th, 1869) she was escorted by twenty vessels sent to meet her, and as they passed through the double ranks of the Turkish men-of-war, twenty-five on either side, each one saluted with a salvo of 101 guns, which was answered by an equal number from the Imperial yacht. Each side of the Bosphorus was lined with troops, every ship was hung with flags, and crowds were there to see. Then when the *Aigle* had reached the Palace Beglerbeg, which was to be the residence of the Empress, the Sultan came on board to receive her.

Here too her visit was looked upon as a national holiday, and all the principal towns, as well as the tributary states, sent deputations to the capital to welcome her, and to share in the general festivities in sight of the picturesque Bosphorus, which presented a wonderful scene as it glittered in the lavish illumination of every evening.

¹ This vessel was arranged for forty oars; it had a crimson canopy, with gold-embroidered tassels and fringes, which had occupied hundreds of Turkish women for months. The prow was decorated with a massive silver dove, of which there were fabulous reports current respecting its weight and value.

A week later Eugénie arrived at Alexandria, where she was received by Ismail, viceroy of Egypt. From here she continued her triumphal journey to Cairo by rail, one unbroken route of display and illumination. Her vessel was the first to go through the Suez Canal when, with great ceremony, it was declared to be "open." Amid the thunder of the cannon, while the Egyptian musicians played "Partant pour la Syrie" and "Vive l'Empereur!" and those on the *Aigle* responded with the popular airs of Egypt, Eugénie sat on the flower-strewn deck, proud as the Empress of the French, as queen of fashion and beauty, and as the main promoter of the stupendous work. Nearly every naval Power was represented at this opening, and the Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, and several other celebrities were on board the *Aigle* with her. But among all these enthusiastic masses, there was hardly an eye that sought anybody but the sovereign of France, while among the jubilant shouts of thousands there was scarcely a cheer that was not meant for Eugénie before all others.



CHAPTER XV.

WAR OF 1870—FALL OF THE EMPIRE.

THE revolutionary spirit in Paris can be kept under, but it is never entirely extinguished.

Napoleon III. had restrained it for a comparatively long time, but there were unmistakable signs that discontent was rife. The smouldering of 1866 had continued more or less till January, 1870, when Rochefort had done his utmost to kindle the flame of sedition. The gradual decline of the Empire, the Emperor's ill-health, and the restless condition of the people all tended to awaken serious alarm.

Napoleon's truest friends advised him to strengthen his dynasty with liberal institutions, maintaining that, in the event of a change, they would prove a safeguard to his young and inexperienced son. But another party was of opinion that the maintenance of the Empire demanded victories, and they longed for war

with Prussia in order that military glory might rouse the devotion of the people to the name of Napoleon, while they never for one instant suspected that one decisive blow would prove sufficient to hurl the proud Imperial house to the ground. It is equally certain that the Empress, who placed herself at the head of the war faction, was the very last to entertain the possibility of defeat.

Napoleon followed the first advice, and in 1870 it was settled by some 8,000,000 voters that France was no longer to be an autocratic, but a constitutional Empire. The second advice was absolutely repugnant to him, and his motto, "*L'Empire, c'est la paix*," in spite of the wars which circumstances and party spirit had forced upon him, was far from being mere empty words in his mouth.

When the Austrians were falling in rows under the fire of his cannon at Solferino, he had ordered his generals to desist in spite of their protest, and whenever the ghastly victory was mentioned in his presence he was seized with a nervous shudder. His fervent wish was to issue a manifesto calling upon all the Great Powers to disarm, and the suggestion of a war with Prussia was doubly distasteful to him, as

he believed in a clear presentiment that warned him that his fall was at hand.

Eugénie and his ministers tried persuasion, but, peace-loving as he was, he delayed again and again to accede to their wishes. Then they had recourse to stronger language when, ill and weary as he was of the burden of government, he at last began to waver. The enthusiasm of the war party rose higher and higher, and in the decisive Ministerial Council at St. Cloud, the evening of July 14th, 1870, the War Minister, Lebœuf, announced that he would resign his title of Maréchal if war were not declared; and the Empress exclaimed in a few energetic words that "war was an unavoidable necessity if the honour of France was not to become a mere empty word."¹ The Emperor yielded with visible reluctance, and war was declared on the slightest of grounds.

The French people had not been eager to fight, and the decision was unexpected, but their courage and enthusiasm rose to the occasion, and the Emperor and Empress were cheered with jubilant shouts wherever they appeared; the horses were taken from their

¹ *Memoirs of an Ex Minister*, by the Right Honourable the EARL OF MALMESBURY.

carriage, which was dragged by the excited youth of France through the streets of the capital. The whole nation rushed to arms against Prussia, and volunteers joined the standards in crowds; enthusiasm rose to fever-heat; and the shout, "À Berlin! À Berlin!" resounded on all sides, as well as the Girondist song,

"Mourir pour la patrie,"

and

"Allons, enfants de la patrie;
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!"

The prohibited revolutionary song was suddenly heard from all lips. The dregs of the populace and the old Legitimists, Republicans, and the friends of the Empire, all sang the "Marseillaise," as with one mouth.

The decision to undertake the war was communicated to the Chambers on July 15th, and on the 16th Napoleon met the Senate, when the ex-minister Rouher made a speech which clearly expressed the confidence of the nation in assured victory.

"Your Majesty is drawing the sword," he said, "and the whole nation is quivering with pride and eagerness to accompany you. . . . It will once again be our exalted Empress who will preserve the Imperial power, and our great

Legislative Assembly who will protect her with respectful devotion. The people well know her noble, generous heart, and have perfect confidence in her wisdom and energy. With legitimate pride and entire trust, your Majesty is again assuming the command over your victorious legions from Magenta and Solferino, and the very kernel of our great nation will follow you to the field of battle. When the hour of danger is at hand, there, too, is the hour of triumph, and a grateful nation will not delay to prepare all the glories of victory for her equally grateful children. Thus as soon as Germany is freed from the burden that oppresses her, when Europe has regained peace by the valour of our arms, your Majesty, who two months ago acquired fresh strength for yourself and your dynasty by the national will, can again take up the great work of reform. France knows this, and your Majesty's genius is the guarantee that its accomplishment will suffer no longer delay than the time necessary to achieve your victory."

The restlessness which had been working as leaven among the people had found a vent, and eager soldiers daily left the capital for the frontier. Paris was in the brightest of humours,

and looked for news of victory with the calm of perfect confidence. Each day it was reported that the Emperor would join the army, and he finally set out (July 28th), accompanied by the Prince Imperial, and leaving the Empress as Regent.

On the 24th she had inspected the fleet stationed at Cherbourg, and read the proclamation of war to the excited troops, evidently enjoying even then the triumphs of "her little war," as she boastingly called the campaign which had not yet begun. She forgot the miseries created by war, even under its most favourable aspect, and only thought that the French dynasty would be assured by victory, and that her son would return home covered with glory, which would make him even more confident than before of the goodwill of the people and of the army.

In reply to the Emperor's inquiry as to whether all was ready, the Minister of War, Lebœuf, replied that everything was more than ready (*archiprêt*); that the troops were in perfect order, even to the last gaiter button. How different was the reality from these boastful words!

Army reform had been begun under the pre-

vious ministry, but it had not been carried out, and the whole military system was defective; while not even an important fortress like Metz was properly garrisoned. The contractors were defrauding the Government, and want and disorder characterised every department.

Under these circumstances, it is self-evident that the French were not likely to attack the Germans in a hurry. But after some waiting and delay, which seemed endless in Paris, the first telegram, a note of victory, was at last received. The insignificant encounter at Saarbrück was magnified into a glorious beginning, and the Emperor sent Eugénie the following despatch, which was copied by all the papers of Europe, and cast a tinge of ridicule on the Prince Imperial which only the blood that flowed at Itelezi has entirely washed away:—

“Louis has received his baptism of fire. He was admirably calm, and never lost his self-possession. One of General Frossard’s divisions has taken the heights that command the east of Saarbrück. The Prussians made a short resistance. We were in the foremost rank, and bullets fell at our feet. Louis has kept one ball that fell close by him. Some of the soldiers wept when they saw him so composed. We lost only one officer and ten men.

“NAPOLÉON.”

The message was received with pleasure, but with no enthusiasm. It was only what might have been expected, though even in France there were some who could not refrain from smiling at Lulu's baptism of fire. Bulletins of the victory were issued by order of the Minister of the Interior, in which the presence of mind and coolness of the Prince were warmly extolled as fitting proofs of the great name he bore. Eugénie ordered the guns to be fired, and went to Notre Dame to offer her thanks to God in the presence of the people.

But defeat was close at hand, and the victories of the Germans at Weissenburg, Wörth, and Fohrbach followed each other in quick succession. An attempt was made to keep these reverses secret at the French headquarters. Paris was without tidings from the seat of war, and the ministers who went to St. Cloud to confer with the Regent found her in tears and anxiety at the long silence.

At last reports of defeat reached the capital, and evoked either gloomy despondency or impotent rage. The newspapers literally shrieked in their wrath and smarting humiliation, while renewed signs of a revolutionary spirit became apparent among the people.

Early in the morning of Sunday, August 7th, the Empress arrived in Paris from St. Cloud, and immediately summoned the ministers, the President of the Legislative Corps, and the Senate to a Council. The following day Paris was declared to be in a state of siege, and the Empress issued her appeal to the people:—

“Frenchmen!

“The beginning of the war has not been favourable to us, and our arms have suffered defeat, but let us be firm in resistance, and hasten to retrieve our losses. Let there be but *one* party among us: that of France; let us follow but *one* banner: that of our honour! I shall be in your midst, and you will see me faithful to my duty and calling, the first where danger threatens, the foremost to guard the banner of the Empire. I call upon all good citizens to preserve order, the breach of which will be equivalent to conspiring with our enemies.

“EUGÉNIE.”

She even thought of putting herself at the head of the defenders of Paris to encourage and strengthen the troops by her personal presence, and this part which she meant to play was perfectly in accordance with the vain theatrical side

of her character, but the suggestion met with no response. The people, who knew her fondness for dramatic effect, who were accustomed to the flourish of trumpets by which she courted attention, who were indignant and exasperated, clamoured for action. Not oratorical display, not melodrama, but victory was what they wanted.

The ministry was the first to suffer from the universal discontent, and Emile Olivier had to resign in favour of General Montauban, Comte de Palikao, who had occupied a prominent position in a war against China, and who was now seventy-three; while at the same time General Trochu was chosen Governor of Paris.

In order to satisfy those who wished to see but one man in command, Marshal Bazaine was appointed generalissimo over the entire army, and Napoleon ceased to direct its movements. Under this agreement the Emperor's place would seem to have been in Paris, but the new ministry, as well as the Empress, met the suggestion of his return with well-grounded objections: the air was thick with revolutionary ideas, which needed but a spark to kindle them into a flame.

Eugénie wished to review the troops, but even her warmest admirers dissuaded her; her

orders were ignored by the Senate, and Gambetta exclaimed in the Legislative Assembly, "It is our business to know whether we are choosing the good of our country or that of the dynasty." Shouts of "Bravo!" resounded on all sides, the Left and the Centre sharing in the wild excitement that agitated the meeting.

The people were daily becoming more angry and bitter, more impatient of delay, more sick with disappointed hope, as they stormed at the supposed mistakes of the generals, and hurled their scorn and invectives against the Imperial rulers.

It was evident to outsiders that the throne was tottering, and as the victorious Germans approached nearer and nearer there remained no further room for doubt. The position of the Empress had never been more critical than at this juncture, when the newly formed ministry inspired no confidence, and was even powerless to protect her; the Legislative Assembly was disorganised, nigh upon dissolution; she had no experienced general by her side, and the devotion of the troops to the Napoleon family had vanished like smoke. She stood alone and defenceless, at the mercy of an excited populace who were ready to rise against her on the very

smallest provocation. Then it was, when anxiety was agitating all minds, and defeat on the frontier was giving rise to disunion and tumult in Paris, in the midst of which was heard, as one deep sob, the eager longing for the safety of the land, she learnt to grasp how fatal had been her zeal to promote that "little war." In her own anxiety for her husband and child, she understood the sorrow of thousands of wives and mothers, and she longed to try to make good what her thoughtlessness had brought about, and to this end she unweariedly strained every nerve. In her prosperous days her less estimable points—vanity, extravagance, and bigotry—had had the upper hand; they had not choked her better qualities, but they had dissipated her strength, and by their rank growth had almost hidden her true self. It was adversity that revealed her as she really was: a remarkable and noble woman.

In spite of the growing animosity of the people, her activity was unbounded; it was as if a new spirit were animating her, as if her strength grew as dangers increased. She personally organised nursing for the wounded, and turned the sumptuous salons of the Tuileries into a hospital. She rarely slept at night, and

if she sought a short rest during the day, she gave orders that she was to be roused on the receipt of every message, every telegram. Then, giddy, tired to death, often near to fainting, she would hasten to the bedside of the wounded, almost forgetting her own misery in the presence of such boundless pain and sorrow.

But the screams and groans of the dying made her rush back to her own rooms, where she paced up and down in the most awful agony of soul, wringing her hands, as if in acute bodily suffering; or she passed hours in the ardent prayer of deep anxiety for her own dearest ones and her people, filled with loving sympathy towards the women who shared her grief, and gratitude to the men who were fighting their country's battles.

When it was proposed to strengthen the army of Marshal Macmahon with 20,000 men, who, under the command of General Vinoy, formed the defence of Paris, her counsellors represented to her that if they were withdrawn, the capital might at any minute fall into the power of the Revolutionists.

"Do not think of me," she replied, "nor of the dynasty, but think of the army and of France. I will not even allow the question to

be discussed. Realise only what a weight of remorse would rest upon us to all time if it were ever in our power to say that these 20,000 men might have changed defeat into victory, while we, on the plea of protection for ourselves, kept them here in Paris. Lose not a moment; let General Vinoy leave this very day."

The Empress was seized with a perfect fever of activity. She besought the aid of Austria, and wrote to the Queen of England to supplicate her to use her influence in the cause of peace. She pardoned about 2000 criminals, and superintended the preparations for the defence of the capital, after numerous conferences with General Trochu, whom she trusted in all good faith. Then she prudently sent all the most important of her private and family papers on board a French man-of-war, as well as some of the most valuable art treasures from the Louvre. She took an inventory of the Crown diamonds, so that if the worst happened, not a shadow of suspicion could rest upon her; but the jewels that she was perfectly justified in calling her own she sent to her mother in Spain.

Over-exertion and excitement were telling upon the Empress, and she aged visibly in the course of these few weeks as she looked day

by day with nervous tension for news from the seat of war, which was even more dismal than fear had led her to conceive, and her counsellors were of opinion that it would be best to keep it a secret from the people as long as possible.

And then came the last blow. As the Minister of the Interior, Henri Chevreau, was on his way to the Tuileries in the afternoon of September 3rd, he was stopped by the Manager of the Telegraph Office, who told him that he had received a message of the utmost importance from the Emperor to the Empress, adding: "I usually attend to the telegrams that are exchanged between their Majesties myself; but I have not the heart to take this one."

It was the well-known dispatch—

"The army is defeated and taken. I am a prisoner.

"NAPOLEON."

The Minister went straight to Eugénie to communicate the fearful tidings, which surpassed all that her gloomiest forebodings had conceived, and no words can describe the anguish of the unhappy Empress, who had not a thought for her own fate; her first and last were for the French nation. As Regent, she would not even admit the possibility of using the troops against

the people, and thus adding the horrors of civil war to that being waged against the foreigner.

Late that evening the fatal tidings were known to all, but, instead of uniting in a body against the enemy, the people succumbed to the revolutionary spirit that prevailed in the capital, and no impartial onlooker could doubt that the days of the Empire were numbered. Dense crowds surged up and down the streets, which echoed with the voices of men and women, shouting: "Down with the Emperor! Down with the Empress! Long live the Republic!" mingled with the weighty words, "An Emperor dies, but he does not surrender."

An informal meeting was held in the Legislative Assembly at one o'clock in the morning. Not a member was missing, each minister was in his place, and the galleries were tightly packed with listeners, when the President rose amid the stillness of death, and said:—

"Misfortune has brought us together at this unwonted hour, and I have summoned the meeting to deliberate on our immediate position." Then the old hero Palikao, no great orator, announced in a clear voice the catastrophe at Sedan, adding: "After such news it is impossible for the ministers to deliberate together before to-morrow."

When the President of the Chamber enquired if the meeting might be adjourned, and the reply, "Yes, yes," had reached him from all sides, a bushy head was seen to emerge, and a hoarse, evil-sounding voice—it was Jules Favre—proposed these three resolutions:—

"The deposition of the Emperor; the appointment of a provisional Government; the retention of Trochu as Governor of Paris."

Only the members of the Extreme Left had signed this proposition, which met with singular indifference, and though one member on the Right affirmed that they had no authority to determine the deposition of the Emperor, even this was insufficient to break the unusual silence, which prevailed also throughout the entire night on the streets and boulevards; it was the calm before the storm.

That Eugénie was the very last to believe in a Revolution is evident from the circumstance that she had not made the faintest preparation for flight. She rose early the next morning, heard mass in her private chapel, and went to the hospital to inspect the arrangements for the wounded, returning at twelve o'clock to meet General Trochu, who during this audience, a few hours before he accepted his appointment

under the new Government, solemnly assured her of his unswerving fidelity. After this, a deputation waited on the Regent in order to persuade her to consent to the appointment of a Commission in place of her present Government, and at the same time to suggest that she should resign the throne. She listened calmly to these propositions, and then said:—

“It is your opinion, gentlemen, that what you propose is calculated to ensure happiness in the future, but on the condition that I at once, and in the hour of threatening danger, forsake the post that has been entrusted to me. This I cannot do, but, believe me, the trials through which I have passed have been so painful, so terrible, that the thought of retaining the crown for myself and my son has not the smallest attraction for me at this moment. The sole wish, the sole ambition, that animates me is to fulfil to the last detail the duties that have been imposed upon me. If the Legislative Assembly are of opinion that my presence is a hindrance, that the Emperor’s name is an obstacle, and not a support, that they insist on my deposition, I will not murmur; I will yield my post with honour; I will not flee. But I feel persuaded that the only practical patriotic course will be

for all to unite under my leadership, to cast on one side all home questions, and to concentrate our forces to repulse the invaders.

“As for myself,” continued the Empress, “I am prepared to brave all dangers and to submit unconditionally to the Legislative Assembly when they organise our defence. If this should prove of no avail, I believe that I can be of use in procuring less disastrous conditions of peace.

“A representative of one of the Great Powers offered yesterday to suggest the intervention of neutral states respecting these two points: that France should remain entire and that the Imperial dynasty should be protected. I replied that I was willing to agree to intervention that might affect the country, but that I emphatically rejected it for ourselves. The maintenance of the dynasty is a question which concerns the country alone, and I will never permit foreign Powers to interfere in our personal affairs. If you become unanimous that it will hinder a firm coalition among Frenchmen and militate against the interests of the country that the authority should remain in my hands, do you think that it would be very presumptuous in a woman who had voluntarily renounced her throne to ask

permission of the Chambers to remain in Paris in any home they might think fit to assign to her? Do you not think, gentlemen, that they would allow her to share the sorrows, the dangers, and the heart anguish of the besieged capital?"

Not a voice responded to this appeal, and Eugénie dismissed the deputation with the following words:—

"I authorise you to return to the Legislative Assembly and to say to General Palikao and his colleagues, that I have implicit confidence in them, and that I give them full liberty to take such means in the interest of the country as they shall judge desirable, and to which I promise my sanction."

In the meantime revolutionary excitement was simmering in the city, the "Marseillaise" was heard at every corner, red flags were hoisted on every important building, and a boy hardly ten years old, climbed up to the bronze railing in front of the Tuileries and decorated it with the banner of the Republic, while thousands upon thousands flocked to the Place de la Concorde, never tired of screaming, "Vive la République!"

The Legislative Corps had reassembled, but

the intrusion of workmen and National Guards rendered quiet discussion an impossibility, when they were continually interrupted by clamours for liberty.

“The Republic shall not be proclaimed here,” shouted Gambetta, “but at the Hotel de Ville.”

The words were greeted with boisterous applause, the deputies of the Left adjourned thither, and a Government of National Defence was formed. The news spread almost instantaneously that the Empire was at an end, and was received with savage joy, not one voice being raised in defence of the fallen dynasty.

The rabble rushed into the Hotel de Ville, where they seized the portraits of the Emperor and Empress painted by Horace Vernet and other masters, slit them with knives, trampled them under foot, and threw them out of the windows. The Imperial emblems were shattered, and the eagles that could not be immediately removed hidden under papers. An eye-witness¹ wrote: “From the windows of the huge barracks, formerly filled with troops who appeared ready to die for their Emperor, I noticed soldiers laughing, waving their handkerchiefs,

¹ Correspondent of the *Daily News*.

and shouting, 'Vive la République !' Then upon the quay I saw busts of the Emperor pitched out of the houses and thrown into the Seine amid tremendous shouts of applause. Everybody was laughing or weeping with joy, shaking hands, and embracing his neighbour."

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CHAPTER XVI.

FLIGHT OF EUGÉNIE—ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND

THE Empress was still at the Tuileries when one of the Prefects of the Palace told her, on his return from the meeting of the Legislative Corps, all that had occurred; but even then it was her wish to remain at her post. "For," she said, "nobody can ever feel unhappy in France."

In the meantime excited crowds were rushing to the Tuileries, and the carriage of the first Lady of Honour, the Princesse d'Essling, was stopped by the mob, who threatened her and forced her to return. The hum of the seething multitude at last penetrated to the deserted rooms, and when Eugénie questioned the Governor, General Mellinet, if they could defend the Palace without bloodshed, he replied that it would be impossible.

"Then," said the Empress, "not one drop of blood shall be shed for me and mine."

The echo of voices and footsteps came nearer and nearer, till the shouts of "She will escape!" "Abdication!" "Long live the Republic!" "Down with the Spaniard!" "Down with Madame Badinguet!" "Forward!" "To the Palace!" reached them like a mighty roar.¹

Prince Metternich and the Italian Ambassador, Nigra, had hastened to the support of the Empress, whom they entreated to flee, while they represented to her that each minute was rendering escape more and more perilous; but she still could not conceive the necessity for this flight, which was, moreover, repugnant to her nature.

The throng outside was surging backwards and forwards, crushing and treading each other under foot, animated by *one* thought, hatred of the Imperial house, which had spread like infection among the masses, that rolled on like a living avalanche, panting for breath, till they reached the gates of the Tuileries, which they forced; and then their shrieks became audible on the grand staircase. The Empress was conjured to

¹ The nicknames of "Badinguet" and "Madame Badinguet," which were frequently used by the enemies of Napoleon III. and Eugénie, originated in the escape of Louis Napoleon from the fortress of Ham, which he left in the clothes of a journeyman mason, named Badinguet.

leave the Palace, and not to expose her attendants to danger.

“Is this your last word?” she asked. “Can I not be of use in organising a defence? Tell me, have I done my duty to the last hour?”

Her ladies, overcome with deep emotion, kissed her hands; but the gentlemen knew that not a moment was to be lost, and hastened her departure.

Enveloped in a long dark cloak and accompanied by her reader, Madame Lebreton, the two ambassadors, the Minister Chevreau, and a few ladies and gentlemen of her suite, she was hurried from the room.

It proved impossible to go through the Palace garden, for the Place du Carrousel, which was separated from them by a light railing, was crowded; and as they were retracing their steps to try another way, the Empress stood a second to contemplate the mob, as she exclaimed: “What folly to waste their powers of resistance with the enemy at their gates!”

And then, choked with emotion, she added: “Unhappy Palace! It is then the decree of fate that all crowned heads shall leave you in this manner.”

In the meantime her companions had gradually

dropped away, in order to ensure their own safety, all except the foreign ambassadors and Madame Lebreton, who followed her mistress under the care of Prince Metternich, while Eugénie clung to the arm of Nigra.

They reached the Louvre through the Pavillon de Flore, and had to traverse the whole length of the galleries in order to emerge by the exit to "St. Germain l'Auxerrois," the square of which was as densely crowded as the Place du Carrousel, each man vying with his neighbour in screaming, "Abdication! Long live the Republic!"

The little company hesitated to open the gate, but the wild roar of the rabble was behind them, and to return was but to be lost in their hands; there was no alternative: they had to "go forward."

The Empress did not exhibit a sign of faltering, her courage seemed to rise in the critical moment, when she passed through the gate. "You are holding my arm," she said to Nigra; "do you feel me tremble?"

"No, Madame," replied the ambassador, "not in the least."¹

¹ Imbert de Saint Amand, who records these words in his *Les Femmes des Tuileries*, adds that they were personally communicated to him by Monsieur Nigra.

Eugénie was now in the very midst of the mob who one and all were inspired with hatred against her, and for a moment she thought of the fate of Marie Antoinette, and wondered whether she too would be insulted by this angry crowd, for their excitement was so intense that it was difficult to foresee what scenes might be enacted in the event of her being recognised on her flight.

Providentially there was a *fiacre* at hand, and as she was rushing towards it a *gamin* shouted, "Look! there's the Empress!" but the words passed unheeded by the crowd, though Nigra stood still just one second to speak to the boy, while the Empress stepped into the carriage, followed by Madame Lebreton. Prince Metternich shouted an imaginary address to the coachman, and the ladies made good their immediate escape, though their troubles were far from being at an end. In her hurry Eugénie had forgotten her purse, and to her horror her companion found that she had only three francs, hardly enough to pay for the *fiacre*, so, in order to avoid a dispute with the driver, they determined to get out and continue their way, where they did not know, on foot. They alighted at the Boulevard Haussman, and while Madame Lebreton was paying the

man, Eugénie stepped into a doorway. It is said that she knocked in vain at door after door before she could find a refuge in her own capital, and then came the happy inspiration to seek out Dr. Evans, a celebrated American dentist, whom she had known from her youth, and who had frequently visited her at the Tuileries.

She had to wait her turn in the ante-room, like any other patient, till Madame Lebreton was able to enter the inner room and tell the dentist that the Empress was outside, hoping to find protection under his roof until her flight from Paris could be accomplished. The doctor's surprise was indescribable, for he knew nothing of the sudden change that circumstances had brought about, and could not conceive that the Empress had the slightest need to fear for her safety. Nevertheless he begged the ladies to rest, while he went into the street to assure himself of the situation. He returned at once, perfectly certain that Eugénie had not left the Tuileries a minute too soon, and utterly regardless of the danger to which he was exposing himself, heedless too of his appointments, he promised to assist her in her flight.

His wife was from home, and it was a fortunate circumstance that he was expecting two lady

patients whom none of his servants knew, and whom the Empress and Madame Lebreton were asked to represent. Mrs. Evans's bedroom was prepared for Eugénie, and at the foot of the bed which she was to occupy, a couch was arranged for her friend.

While the Empress was a prey to deep anxiety for the morrow, and concealed in the house of an American dentist, Paris was jubilant and brilliant; men, women, and children spent the whole evening in the streets, shouting and singing with beaming countenances. Not a soul had a thought for Sedan, the surrender was forgotten, and the city was rejoicing at the fall of the Empire.

Dr. Evans lost not a minute, and under the excuse of visiting a patient, really in order to make preparations for the flight of the Empress, he drove towards Neuilly. His carriage was stopped, and he was asked his name and the object of his drive, but a soldier of the National Guard fortunately recognised him and shouted to his comrade to let him move on.

"I shall want to pass the barrier very frequently," the doctor said, "so look at me well, that you may recognise me, and not stop me again."

His plan was laid, and on his return home he told the ladies that they could pass the Pont de Neuilly the following day under his escort, if the Empress would consent to personate a mad woman. He would give out that he had a lady in his carriage whom he was taking to a *maison de santé* on the other side of Neuilly, and Madame Lebreton was to act as her attendant.

Accompanied by a friend and compatriot of Dr. Evans who had been initiated into the secret, they set out the following morning, and all began well. The doctor was recognised by the guard, but the Empress, who was leaning back in the carriage, her face hidden by a thick veil, passed unnoticed. The first danger was thus overcome, and without a halt they drove on towards St. Germain and Mantes, where they alighted at an inn.

“I have a lady here whom I am taking to a private asylum,” Dr. Evans observed to the landlord. “Let me have a back room with shutters before the windows.”

His orders were obeyed, and the Empress and her companion were thus enabled to enjoy a short rest.

The doctor’s friend had returned to Paris with

the carriage, in the place of which a vehicle was hired to drive the lady, so it was alleged, to an asylum where she was to be left for treatment. It was, moreover, agreed that the Empress was to pretend resistance, and to exhibit such violence and opposition on the way that they would apparently be compelled to turn back and follow another road.

They had hardly driven more than half an hour, before she had entered into a loud altercation with Dr. Evans, and the dispute between the supposed lunatic and her keeper became so violent that the latter shouted to the driver to stop that his patient might walk a little.

"I will not!" shrieked the Empress; and she uttered a scream that frightened the horses to such a degree, the coachman declared he would go no further unless there was quiet. "I will not go to the asylum! I will not walk!" Eugénie continued to shout, and there was therefore nothing to be done but to turn back to the first posting-house, where they dismissed the conveyance and then hired another, which was exchanged at each stage, and thus they drove on to their real destination, the seaside place Deauville, where Mrs. Evans was staying.

As we have seen, the last few weeks had been a time of ceaseless care and anxiety for the Empress, who, besides, had been working beyond her strength, and had been unable to sleep. Both mind and body were exhausted, as she had lost all appetite, and for literally four or five days she had lived on coffee and chloral, which she had taken in large doses to deaden her despair. During the flight she also took nothing but biscuits and a little water or coffee, while, owing to the prolonged strain on her nerves, she could not refrain from incessant weeping; and when sleep had procured her a few minutes' rest, she would suddenly start up and begin to talk or laugh without reason, till she as quickly burst into tears and fell back under the deepest depression.

After two weary days the fugitives reached Deauville, and Dr. Evans took the Empress and Madame Lebreton to his wife, who was about the same height as Eugénie, and at once began to pack up a few things from her own wardrobe, with two or three toilet necessities, for her use. Her Majesty had been especially distressed by the want of pocket-handkerchiefs during her flight, for a cold, in addition to incessant weeping, had simply drenched the two fine cambric hand-

kerchiefs she had with her when she fled. Dr. Evans offered to wash them for her, and at first she naturally refused, though at last she was thankful to accept his friendly services, when he got out, rinsed them in a brook, and hung them on the carriage door to dry as they travelled onwards. What wonder, then, while Mrs. Evans was looking out clothing for her use, her main request was, "Handkerchiefs, handkerchiefs above all"?

Dr. Evans had been busy meanwhile enquiring about vessels leaving for England, and found that there were two in the harbour: a larger American one and a yacht, the *Gazelle*, belonging to Lord Burgoyne. He looked first at the American boat, but did not think her sound; then he addressed himself to the Englishman, who hesitated to take charge of the Empress, partly on political grounds, partly because a storm was brewing. But her good champion continued to urge his suit, and after many entreaties and persuasions Lord Burgoyne consented, but stipulated that the ladies were not to come till the last minute, just before the yacht was to sail, simply because he was unwilling to attract attention to his passengers.

The Empress went on board about midnight,

accompanied by Dr. Evans and her faithful friend, Madame Lebreton, though the anchor was not weighed till the following morning. The fugitives had fled from the perils of the land, but the dangers of the sea had yet to be encountered, and a fearful storm arose, during which large vessels sank in the Channel, while this smaller craft was tossed to and fro by the waves, to right herself again and fight bravely against the furious elements. The crew were unaware that they had a fugitive Empress on board, who looked to them for safety, but they worked steadily on with God before their eyes, as sailors do who realise that the next second may hurl them into eternity.

The storm did not abate, and they were in serious danger; the ladies were thrown from side to side of their narrow cabin like bales of goods; and as night came on there was scarcely a ray of hope, when Lord Burgoyne appeared at their cabin door with terror depicted on every feature, and shouted that all was lost.

"It is your fault," he shrieked to Dr. Evans, and left the cabin as suddenly as he had come. The three passengers looked at each other, and, in spite of sea-sickness, depression, and fatigue,

the Empress could not restrain a smile at the Englishman's panic.

The *Gazelle* continued to fight against the storm and contrary winds till it gradually became calmer, and towards three o'clock in the morning, the little yacht, whose safety bordered on the miraculous, touched the pier at Ryde.

With what mingled feelings must the ex-Empress have greeted the friendly shore, when she would involuntarily recall the first time that she visited England with her mother, a young, happy girl, without anxiety or serious duties, with her heart full of hope and pleasurable expectation! She would think, too, of the second time when she landed as the honoured guest of England's Queen, happy and lovely, cheered with enthusiasm by the people—her first step towards recognition by Europe at large. And then she would recall her numerous subsequent visits to Great Britain, and every recollection would tend but the more clearly to accentuate her present helplessness.

And now she was once more hopefully looking forward to the friendly hospitality of England, not as a powerful, much-admired sovereign, but as a fugitive, as an unhappy woman, who craved for sympathy above all; and thus, exhausted

with fatigue, and practically fasting for many days, her heart breaking with sorrow, Eugénie landed on the coast which had welcomed her so often, but this time with no witness to her tearless grief but the grey light of morning.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EMPRESS IN EXILE—DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

EARLY in the morning of September 8th the landlord of the York Hotel, Ryde, was roused from his slumbers by violent knocking at the door. A gentleman and two ladies were outside, who had already asked for admission at one hotel, the proprietor of which had been unwilling to admit foreigners of such a shabby, rumpled appearance.

But, in spite of the indescribably weary and exhausted look of the ladies, whose clothes were torn and tumbled, the owner of the York Hotel does not seem to have scrupled to take them in, but opened the door; and it was here that Eugénie, Madame Lebreton, and Dr. Evans enjoyed a few hours' rest before they proceeded to Brighton, where Eugénie heard the news that the Prince Imperial had escaped through

Belgium, and had landed at Dover the previous day.¹

In the midst of her own troubles, Eugénie had naturally been in anxious fear about her son; she therefore left at once for Hastings, where she hoped to find him, and it was here that mother and child saw each other again. But how different was the meeting from the one they had dreamed of when the Prince Imperial, under the protection of his father, the enthusiasm of the people and the troops, followed by his mother's proud hopes, had left her for "Berlin."

The time which Eugénie spent in Hastings was not only in sharp contrast with her brilliant life as a sovereign, but also with the days during which the war lasted and her subsequent perilous

¹ The *Moniteur* contains the following news of the Prince Imperial, of whom nothing has been heard since he was at Rethel with his "Household Cortège and Cent Gardes":—

"LILLE, August 21st.

"The Prince Imperial arrived at Avesnes at five o'clock yesterday morning, accompanied by two general officers and fifty Cent Gardes. The Emperor feared a *coup de main* of the enemy to take the young Prince and, moreover, wished to put him out of the way of the dangers and chances of a battle which, in all probability, will be a very great one. It is expected that the Prince will remain for some time at Avesnes, not only to await the result of the engagement already begun, but also to recruit his health, which has suffered from the violent emotions he has long been subjected to."—*Daily News*.

flight. For the last few months she had hardly had time to think, except with difficulty, tossed to and fro as she was by waves of hope, disappointment, and fear; and it was not till she had taken up her residence in the Marine Hotel that she had time to look back and to reflect, although with that tinge of despondency from which at times none are wholly exempt.

Before the war, her life had been one of fulfilled wishes, brilliant triumphs, and successful undertakings; her experiences had never taught her to mistrust her friends, nor to doubt the fidelity of her adherents. She, who so rarely forgot a service rendered to herself, could not believe in ingratitude; her frank nature could not conceive falseness, and she was almost as confiding as a child. She did not know her fellow-beings in times of need, and the future was to teach her how to read accurately this difficult chapter in the experience of life.

She had scarcely turned her back on the Tuileries before her own servants had plundered the Imperial apartments; and later on, when news reached her that the mob had forced their way into the Palace, stealing and burning as they went, the exile had but one thought:

“Poor Trochu!” “Why do you pity him?” asked one of those about her in surprise.

“He so often said to me,” she replied, “‘No assailants shall enter the Tuileries, Madame, but over my body.’ Therefore he must be dead. Poor Trochu!”

That General Trochu, who had forsaken the Empress in the hour of danger, considered himself exceedingly lucky to be the self-constituted President, was but one example out of countless others, how those who had bowed low before her in the days of her power were among the first to turn against her in adversity. Every column of the newspapers that came into her hands revealed to her the fate of fallen greatness, and that those who had been the most signally favoured were the foremost to lift up their voices against her. Where she had seen nothing but fawning humility, she was pelted with stones, and the loudest shouts of anger came from those whom she had the least suspected of disaffection.

The Government of the National Defence lost no time in abolishing every emblem of Imperialism, and spared no pains to convey the impression that the dynasty which had procured for France eighteen years of happiness and

prosperity had been a curse, and not a blessing; and, with the object of finding something incriminating against the Empress, they examined every paper she had left behind, but all to no avail, for even those which were published in order to defame her contained nothing compromising.

Her clothes and ornaments, with some of the money found in the Tuileries at the time of her flight, were sent after her to England; but while Eugénie had to part with her diamonds in order to meet pressing needs, and Napoleon was compelled to sell his private property in Rome, "Palazzo dei Cesari," for 100,000 francs, it was still reported in Paris that millions had been put by, and that the Imperial family had enriched themselves at the expense of the people. They maintained that the Emperor had large investments in foreign stocks, and that he had capital in the funds in Holland, England, and America, as well as in all the railways of the world.

The Empress was seized with wrath and despair when she heard of these lies and mean slanders, and her stay in Hastings, where both inhabitants and visitors tormented her with intrusive curiosity, became unbearable to her.

Not even the sea air which she so loved could raise her spirits, and the lovely outlook on to the Channel only reminded her in bitter irony of her former happy days at Biarritz.

The contrast between the brilliant past, which had ceased so suddenly, was continually before her eyes, and she was realising but too acutely how lonely and forsaken she was. Her husband was a prisoner in a foreign land, and her child, though not too young to suffer under misfortune, was not old enough for her to rely upon. What remained of her former greatness? Only cruel disappointment, which met her at every turn. Where was the extravagant admiration of all France, where the friendship and devotion in which she had so confidently believed? They were gone without a trace, or dissolved into hate and execration.¹

The King of Prussia offered a residence to herself and her son at Wilhelmshöhe, but she would not accept the hospitality of the enemy of France, and towards the end of September

¹ Among the few who remained faithful to her in misfortune must be named the Princess Murat, the Duke and Duchess de Mouchy, Madame Canrobert, the Marquis Lavalette, and Miss Shaw, the Prince Imperial's nurse, who stayed with the ex-Empress for a short time in Hastings.

she removed to Camden House at Chislehurst, which Dr. Evans¹ had taken for her.

Although she had lost her position, Eugénie had many opportunities of taking part in current politics, and while she was in Hastings, when the circumstances which had induced her flight were still so fresh that it would have been quite natural for her to use her prerogative as Regent, Bismarck had sent an envoy to treat with her of peace. But she had replied that "as long as there was an enemy in France, and as long as the least cession of territory was under discussion, she should refrain from all negotiations."

And Bismarck's messenger was not the only one who tried to induce her, for her own advantage, to take a part in the course of events. There was still one spot in France which was firm and threatening to the hosts of Germany, and at least one commander who was faithful to Imperialism. In the strong fortress of Metz was

¹ "PARIS, November 15th, 1897.—The celebrated American dentist, Dr. Evans, whose consulting-room was the frequent resort of royal personages, died to-day."—*Central News*.

"The death of Dr. Evans removes a personage who will find a place in history for the part he played in aiding the Empress Eugénie to escape from Paris after the fall of Sedan in 1870. As a fashionable dentist he made a considerable fortune in Paris, and resided, at the time of the incident referred to, in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. He had also a villa, or château, at Versailles, where he lived in quite seignorial dignity."—*Daily Mail*.

Marshal Bazaine, with 170,000 picked troops and the whole of the Imperial Guard which had so recently filled the Parisians with pride when grand reviews had represented the warlike force of the Empire. The Marshal considered himself strong enough to determine whether peace should be concluded or whether hostilities should be renewed; therefore, with the consent of the King of Prussia, he sent General Bourbaki to Chislehurst to inform the Empress that he was willing to conclude a peace if she would authorise him to do so.¹

¹ Without the prompting of quite an obscure Frenchman, named Regnier, Bazaine would hardly have thought of entering into negotiations either with the Empress or with the enemies of his country. This romantic adventurer, a citizen of Meudon, who had fled to London with his family on the approach of the Germans, was seized with the absurd idea of working for the re-establishment of the Empire, and, with the energy of enthusiastic fanaticism, he strained every nerve to turn the wheel of fortune in favour of the sinking dynasty. He went first to Hastings to incite the Empress to return, or to go to Corsica, where she would be sure to be welcomed with enthusiasm, or, finally, to take up her quarters on board a French man-of-war, where she would be on French ground, and from whence she could negotiate with the enemy. From the Empress, who gave him but little encouragement, Regnier went to the German headquarters, where he unfolded his plans for the restoration of the Empire to Bismarck, who showed himself quite willing to conclude peace with Eugénie. Aided by Bismarck, he passed unhindered through the Prussian besieging army to Metz, where he encouraged Bazaine to make the above-named proposals for peace. It is a fact that it was this ambiguous attitude towards the existing Government of France, in conjunction with the surrender of Metz, which later on led to the accusation against Bazaine as a traitor to his country.

Tempting as it must have been to the active mind of the Empress to make use of this attempt to regain her power, she prudently refrained from it. She was convinced that the wisest thing for her at this juncture was to hold herself aloof from the scene of action, in order to be able to work with double energy, and at a more favourable moment, for the restoration of her house. In the meantime, the more she kept herself in the background, the more completely was she staving off from the fallen dynasty the humiliating peace which nothing could avert, and the sooner, she felt convinced of it, would the confiding devotion of the people revert to the family of Napoleon.

This prudent reticence with reference to Eugénie's intentions coincided with the expressed wishes of Napoleon on the subject, and in October, while General Bourbaki was awaiting her reply at Chislehurst, she paid a short secret visit to Wilhelmshöhe to hear the opinion of the captive Emperor.

But, in spite of her abstention from politics, there was a rumour current that the Chislehurst salon was the very centre of intrigue, which led Prince Napoleon Jerome, who during the imprisonment of Napoleon III. had taken upon

himself to act as the head of the Imperial family, to go to Camden House, in order to demand an explanation from the Empress, when a stormy scene resulted between these inveterate enemies, and the Prince took good care that a distorted account of the meeting should appear in the public papers.

In reply to the Prince's report, the *Daily News* of October 28th had an official article which emanated from Chislehurst, and emphasised the fact that the Empress had not only kept herself aloof from intrigue, but discouraged the least suggestion that looked like a Bonapartist conspiracy. It was stated further that she had not given up all hope of a restoration, but that she was firmly convinced the time had not yet come to reinstate the dynasty. "Her anxieties were of another kind, she was occupied solely with the national defence, and upon this point her ideas were in complete accord with those of the Government at Tours: the refusal of all cession of territory."

After an imprisonment of about seven months Napoleon III. joined his wife and son at Chislehurst, where the Imperial family lived modestly, almost barely; for although the house which

they had taken was convenient and of good appearance, they were so cramped for space that it was almost impossible to spare a couple of rooms for visitors.¹ But a happy home life compensated for the splendour and wealth of which their reverses had deprived them, and in the midst of these narrow circumstances, Eugénie preserved the dignity and proud self-consciousness which were natural to her.

It became comparatively easy to her to live in retirement and to be silent under reproach when many old friends began to flock round the exile, and warm expressions of devotion daily reached her from France. The talented and eloquent ex-minister Rouher, the vice-Emperor as he was called, who loved Napoleon with unselfish devotion, and never for one moment thought of deserting the dynasty; the former Minister of the Interior, Chevreau, was a visitor at Camden House as he had been at the Tuileries; the Duc de Bassano maintained his old office of Lord Chamberlain even

¹ To show how meagre the accommodation was, we read in L. FROST'S *Recollections of Wilhelmshöhe and Chislehurst* that during an interview with the Emperor's secretary, Monsieur Piétri, he discovered that the latter, in order to make way for a couple of guests, had been obliged to put up with a room about twenty feet long and hardly sixteen feet wide, which had to serve him as office, as well as bed and dressing-room.

under these altered conditions; Paul de Cassagnac, who used his pen with unwearied patience on behalf of the Imperial house, came to Chislehurst; and Madame Lebreton devoted her life to the service of her beloved Empress. Many royal families showed their friendly sympathy with the exiles, among them Prince Oscar of Norway and Sweden (King Oscar II.), while Queen Victoria's friendly devotion has never wearied.

A great work was now before Eugénie, the education of her son, to whom she had always been a most conscientious mother, guiding him with loving firmness, and impressing upon him that it was his imperative duty to learn more than others, because as Emperor he would have to direct all others. And, now that the lost throne had to be regained, she was doubly anxious to make a man of him. He formed the main subject of her thoughts, and filled her with hopeful dreams, so that after a time the premature old age caused by despondency and sorrow seemed to yield, and she began to feel younger as she watched her son's development.

All her expectations had to centre in him, for the health of the Emperor, which had been unsatisfactory for years, became gradually more

alarming. She did not believe that France would recall Napoleon III., but she mentally saw herself returning with Napoleon IV.—the Emperor's mother, if possible more honoured, at any rate happier and prouder, than before. The serious malady which had been sapping the strength of the Emperor while he was still on the throne became more threatening towards the close of 1872, and his physicians advised an operation, to which Napoleon himself is said to have strongly objected. But the Empress, who apprehended no danger, and who possibly in her inmost heart cherished a faint hope that her husband would yet again be able to take a share in the politics of France, persuaded him to submit to the wish of the doctors. He got over the actual operation, but his strength was exhausted, and the "dreamer" passed away January 9th, 1873, without a sound, without a parting word.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.

EUGÉNIE'S grief on the death of Napoleon was deep and violent as she wept again and again by his coffin, and far more bitterly than in the terrible days when she had been forced to flee from her capital. Utterly prostrate, sick at heart and in body, she was unable to be present at the funeral.

But human nature is happily very elastic. It was certainly not a trait of the Empress's character to sit with her hands in her lap and brood over mournful fate, and it was, moreover, a joy to her in the midst of her sorrow to receive so many marks of attachment, not only from friends who had remained true in adversity, but from others who for a time had forgotten past kindnesses and ignored protestations of fidelity, but who on the news that all was over had hastened to England to renew their allegiance.

Death had robbed Napoleon III. of all chance of restoration and redress, but his old adherents were rallying round his son, and it was to them that Eugénie looked for comfort and action.

There was still a strong Bonapartist party in Paris, and appearances were certainly favourable to the restoration of the Empire, though not yet. Thiers, who had been President of the Republic since 1871, had been deposed, and in 1873 Marshal MacMahon was secretly and hastily chosen head of the State by a "fusion" of Legitimists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists, the last of whom benefited considerably by the change of President, as they were now able to enter the political arena as a distinct party.

The Prince Imperial had been sent to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in the autumn of 1872, where he worked well and made good progress; and at once on the death of Napoleon, in spite of the opposition of his father's cousin, he was looked upon as the accredited heir to the Imperial throne.

The adherents of the old French monarchy were not idle at this crisis, and on the occasion of the journey of the Comte de Paris to Frohsdorf in August, 1873, when he addressed

the Comte de Chambord in the name of the Orleanist family "as the sole representative of the monarchical principle in France," a reconciliation was brought about between the two branches of the Bourbon family, and for one brief moment it seemed likely that the Comte de Chambord would be proclaimed king. This movement among the Legitimists caused uneasiness to the Bonapartists, as well as to the Republicans, and excited the former to arrange a grand demonstration on "Napoleon's day."¹ Numbers of gifts were brought or sent over, and hundreds of Frenchmen, wearing deep mourning in spite of the heat, arrived at Chislehurst on the morning of the 15th; they formed themselves into a characteristic procession a short distance from Camden House, and then entered the courtyard by the big iron gates, where they stood to await the Empress and the Prince Imperial, who were greeted with enthusiastic cheers the moment they appeared. Eugénie, who was looking remarkably well, elegant, dignified, and pleased, and the young Prince, who seemed ten years older since the

¹ The 15th August had always been observed with great pomp and ceremonial under the Second Empire, except in 1871, before the conclusion of the war, when it was passed over in silence both in Paris and in the provinces.

death of his father, warmly thanked all present for their attention.

Then followed a solemn memorial service in the adjacent church of St. Mary, and after the singing of a cantata, Abbé Goddard addressed the heir of Napoleon III., and concluded his speech with these words:—

“Louis Napoleon, son of the noble lady who has shown us how to bear with dignity the hardest trials and the most cruel sorrows, you can never forget that great souls are matured in the school of adversity. You, Monseigneur, have already developed qualities that prove you worthy of your father and mother. Therefore persevere, and God will reward your services and your virtue. ‘*Prospera, procede, et regna!*’”

On leaving the church, all the Frenchmen who had formed the procession were admitted into the grounds of Camden House, where they stood in a circle round the Empress and the Prince Imperial, who both shook hands with each one as they again expressed their cordial thanks.

Then shouts of “*Vive l’Empereur! Vive Napoleon IV.!*” were heard on all sides, to which the Prince responded, while his voice quivered with emotion and excitement:—

"I thank you, in my own name and in that of the Empress, because you have come to unite your prayers with ours, and because you have not forgotten the way by which you have already sought us; I also thank the faithful friends at a distance who have sent us so many tokens of their attachment and devotion. As regards myself, who am a fugitive, and stand near to the tomb of the Emperor, I affirm that I represent the principles and the teaching respecting the government of the people which he has bequeathed to me in writing, and which, moreover, as the very foundation of the dynasty, can be condensed into the motto to which I shall always adhere: 'Govern *for* the people and *by* the people.'"

It seemed therefore as though it were only a question of time as to when the late Emperor's son would be recalled to France, and on his eighteenth birthday, when he was declared to be of age, 6,000 Frenchmen came over to Chislehurst to celebrate the event, when the Duke of Padua delivered a speech, to which the young Prince replied that he considered everything depended on an appeal to the people, adding at the same time that if they preferred another form of government he would respect-

fully submit to their decision. But if the name of Napoleon should again prove the lucky one, he was ready to undertake the responsibility laid upon him by the nation, though the thought of such high honour did not make him proud, but, on the contrary, painfully diffident of his own powers.

Eugénie simply lived for her son, and spared no pains to smooth the path to his father's throne; the struggle had only begun, but she was confident of success, and while leaning on Rouher, who devotedly worked at her side, she firmly held the threads in her own hands by which she thought to guide the course of circumstances, and graciously received every Frenchman, however poor in influence, who espoused their cause. She generally spent a couple of months in the summer at Arenenberg, in Switzerland, where, like her mother-in-law, Queen Hortense, she kept open house for the Bonapartists who came to pay their respects and assure her of their allegiance.

The Prince Imperial left the Royal Military Academy February 7th, 1875, having obtained his commission, to the delight of his mother and the pride of his party. His amiable disposition procured him friends wherever he went, and,

unlike his father, he disdained to further his cause by violent agitation and a startling policy; he hoped that France would learn to love him and one day give him the throne to which he felt he had a right.

While Eugénie was working hard to regain the Imperial crown for her son, she was also keen upon a suitable matrimonial alliance for him, but without success. The overtures of Napoleon III. had been rejected by every Court of Europe, and Napoleon IV. met with no better reception, though it was frequently reported that there was a likelihood of a marriage between him and Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, Beatrice, who is said to have been warmly attached to the Imperial exile. But, in spite of the sincere interest which the royal family of England evinced in the Prince, and the faithful friendship of the Queen, she did not think it safe to entrust her daughter's happiness to a young Napoleon. On the failure of this hope, his mother persuaded him to try his luck with Princess Thyra of Denmark, and with this object in view he travelled in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the summer of 1878, but his suit at the Danish Court was equally unsuccessful.

It was the opinion of the Bonapartists that he ought to gain experience as a soldier before he seriously aimed at becoming Emperor, and they urged him to take up arms as a volunteer with the English troops who were fighting in Zululand. But, eager as the Empress was to see her son on his father's throne, she shuddered at the thought that the way to it was to be paved by such means, though the Prince himself was willing to enlist immediately; and, in spite of his mother's urgent appeals, he embarked for Africa, after sending a farewell message to his party. He arrived at the headquarters of Lord Chelmsford, the Commander-in-Chief, April 9th, 1879, and the following month he distinguished himself in several encounters. June 1st he accompanied a reconnoitring party in the neighbourhood of Itelezi, when they were suddenly attacked by Zulus, and his escort fled, leaving him at their mercy. He defended himself against the savages as long as he could, and finally sank, pierced with seven assegais.

"And thus," says the *Milit. Wochenbl.*, speaking of the young Prince with all respect, "an inscrutable fate was granted to him what it obstinately refused to the great founder of the race, Napoleon I., and to his father,

Napoleon III., namely, to fall as a warrior, fighting against his foes.”¹

The death of the Prince Imperial caused an overwhelming sensation in England, and immediately on the receipt of the news Colonel Sidney, a friend of the Imperial family, was requested to communicate the terrible tidings to his mother, who had, however, seen the announcement before he arrived.

On the morning of June 20th all newspapers and telegrams had been kept back, but nobody thought of letters; and as the Empress opened one which bore a double address, to herself and the Secretary Piétri, she read something about *une affreuse nouvelle*, but there were no details. She sent for the Duc de Bassano to explain it

¹ The *Illustrated London News* of June 28th, 1879, has the following: “The fatal occurrence took place on the 1st instant, between four and six miles from the camp of Brigadier-General Wood at Itelezi, on the frontier of the Transvaal territory, bordering on Zululand. It appears the Prince had gone with a small party—Lieutenant Carey, of the 98th, six white men, and a Zulu guide—to make topographical sketches of the neighbourhood, when they came to a kraal apparently deserted, near which they halted for breakfast or lunch. Here they were surprised, and the Prince, slipping in mounting his horse, was overpowered and killed. His body was found 150 yards from the kraal. It was stripped naked and thrown into the gully; only a necklace was left upon it, to which was suspended a locket with medallion portraits and hair and a scapulary with an ‘Agnus Dei,’ or medal of the Virgin Mary. The Zulus had regarded these as magical charms or talismans, and had been deterred by superstition from removing them.”

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to her, and when she saw that he was too overcome with emotion to speak, she felt convinced that some misfortune had happened to the Prince; and as she scanned the countenance of the Duke her thoughts seemed to stagnate, until arrested anxiety at last overwhelmed and petrified her. Her son, for whom she longed day and night, her only hope in life—the thought was so awful that this strong woman, so schooled in adversity, had not the strength to pursue the suggestion to the end.

“Some misfortune has happened to my son,” she groaned. “I will go to the Cape immediately.” The Duke was too overcome to utter a word, and went out into the ante-room, where he met Colonel Sidney, who had just arrived to confirm the news. The Empress recalled the Duke, insisted on hearing everything, and maintained that it was her fixed intention to go to Africa.

“Alas, Madame!” the Duke replied, “it is too late.”

“My son, my poor son!” shrieked the mother, and fainted away.

When this first paroxysm had passed she was still powerless to speak or weep, though she listened in feverish agony while the Duke told

his sad tale, without dwelling on all the painful particulars. Then Madame Lebreton led her into her oratory, where Abbé Goddard did his best to comfort her, but the stricken woman, who had apparently always sought for strength in eternal hope, could find no consolation in religion at this crisis; her thoughts and joys had all been centred in her son, and with the failure of this last earthly prop all her trust and all her gladness had turned to ashes. She could neither eat nor sleep, but continued in a stunned condition, from which she roused at intervals to ask, in the deepest anguish, if it might not be possible that her son was merely ill or wounded, and that she could go and nurse him. It was not till after many sleepless days and nights that tears came to her relief, and probably saved her life.

The whole world sympathised in her grief, millions turned their sorrowful thoughts to Chislehurst, thousands inscribed their names at Camden House, and requiem services were held in all the Roman Catholic churches in London. Queen Victoria, the Princess of Wales, Princess Beatrice, and other members of the royal family expressed their deep sympathy, while the Pope and most of the European sovereigns at once sent telegrams

of condolence. The English, Austrian, and Norwegian-Swedish Courts went into mourning, and the sorrow in Spain was extraordinary. But the relief of weeping on the breast of a devoted mother was denied to Eugénie, for the Countess Montijo was so ill and weak with age that her attendants dared not even tell her of the death of her grandson.

The leader of the Bonapartists, ex-Minister Rouher, fainted on receiving the fatal news, and then, literally bowed down with grief, he left for Chislehurst, as the bearer of the following address:—

“Madame, we lay our deep, inexpressible sorrow at the feet of your Majesty, for the cruel blow which has fallen upon you strikes France in her dearest recollections, as well as in her highest expectations. It has been the will of God that the young Prince should not be spared to your tenderness, to the service of France, and to our sincere devotion, for death has snatched him away at the very moment when we had the right to look for his speedy return to France. We will not compare our grief with yours, boundless as it is, but we only beg your Majesty to accept this testimony of our feelings which are shared by the whole of France.”

Although the French at this moment were strongly Republican, not to say Radical, in their political views, the death of the Prince caused great consternation among the Parisians, to whom it could not fail to recall the days of the Empire, especially that one when the Imperial infant was born, and countless hearts sent up fervent prayers to Heaven for “the child of France” and his mother as they sang—

“Dors, enfant, et que Dieu t’inspire !
Dormez aussi, mère, sans peur ;
La France, qui pour vous conspire,
Vous donnait, naguère un empire ;
Vous lui donnez un empereur.”¹

The happy Parisians had followed the career of their little Prince step by step. His first tooth, his first “Papa !” and “Mamma !” had been conscientiously chronicled in the daily papers; and when at three years old—July 30th, 1859—he was taken by the Empress to Notre Dame to be present at the thanksgiving service for the victory at Solferino, the Imperial carriage could scarcely move for flowers and admiring crowds. “It was,” in the words of the *Moniteur*, “the first time that the Prince Imperial had shown himself

¹ The last verse of a poem by Camille Doucet, published in the *Moniteur*, March 20th, 1856.

to the people on an official occasion, and, by the grace of God, it occurred under the star of victory." Since that time the Napoleonic dynasty had suffered reverses such as are rarely met with in history, and the child who was taken to Notre Dame on that joyful day had since played a part in a ridiculous comedy, and received his "baptism of fire," as his father called it; then he had fled to join his mother in an hotel at Hastings, and after a residence of many years in England, had gone to Zululand, to meet his death fighting against savage tribes.

And the ex-Empress, who had been the pride and ornament of France, had had to flee, and she who had reigned over millions of men, and had thoughtlessly squandered millions of francs, has but few friends, and lives a retired life under the weight of the heaviest of blows, the loss of her only child.

But far more hearts beat in sorrow for this afflicted mother than ever thought of the Empress in the brilliant days of her prosperity, and the admiration which she excited in the zenith of her happiness was as nothing in comparison with the heartfelt sympathy in her bereavement. High and low, rich and poor, enemies and friends, were then "at one,"

surrounding her with genuine devotion in the bitterest hour of her life, though all proved powerless to comfort the stricken mother, who could simply repeat again and again, "Tout est fini," as, shaken by sobs, she hid her head in her hands to shut out the picture ever before her—the mangled body of her son.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

THE Empress Eugénie is still living, but her existence since the day that she heard of the death of her son has been one long path of sorrow. When the body of the Prince Imperial, which had been brought to England, was placed by his Woolwich comrades in the hall of Camden House, on the evening of July 11th, the mother had uttered one despairing cry. Without shedding a tear, but with burning eyes, in which the pitiable satisfaction of having his earthly remains close to her shone through her anguish, she threw herself on her knees and passed the whole night in prayer by the coffin of her child. A witness, who saw her for a few minutes, relates that her features were hardly recognisable, and that her hair had turned white. At five o'clock the next morning, when the light of the wax tapers had paled before the risen sun, she heard Mass, after which she retired to her room, which was draped on all sides, and did not leave it again during that day.

It is scarcely possible to give any impression of the sympathy shown at the funeral of the Prince Imperial.

On the death of Napoleon III. there had been enacted the same drama which takes place in every family when a dear member is carried to his last resting-place, but the death of the Prince Imperial was a thrilling tragedy, which affected even the indifferent and callous. At the funeral of the Emperor comfort was at hand in his son, but at that of Napoleon IV. hope had fled, and even the furrowed cheeks of veterans were wet with tears of sorrow and disappointment. Napoleon III. had been followed to the grave by 20,000 Frenchmen, but 100,000 had assembled to pay the last respect to his son, among whom were over a hundred senators and deputies, countless officers from each branch of the service, with mourners of every rank, high and low, young and old.

Early on the day of the funeral, July 12th, Queen Victoria, accompanied by her daughter Princess Beatrice, arrived at Camden House and placed a golden laurel wreath on the coffin with her own hands. Many visitors of distinction found their way to Chislehurst in the course of the morning, and the solemnity of

the service was enhanced by the genuine mourning of all present. The Archbishop of Southwark officiated, and the most renowned singers from the Opera, including Madame Cater and Christina Nilsson, offered their services; the psalms were sung by the former, but Christina Nilsson, who retained such happy recollections of Imperial splendour in Paris, when it had been her greatest pleasure to sing before this sorrowing mother, was so completely overcome by emotion that her voice failed her, and she burst into tears. . . .

And all these years since those hours of poignant anguish, Eugénie has been waiting day by day until she too shall be released from mental and bodily suffering to rejoin him whom she has most loved on earth.

In 1880 she went to Zululand and trod the very ground where her son had met his death. She has frequented one watering-place after another, on the advice of the most eminent physicians, in search of alleviation to her own sufferings, besides ministering to those of others in the hospitals, in the very despair of her heart, to find nothing at the end but an aching void and agonising recollections.

In 1888 she left Chislehurst, the home of so

much sorrow, and removed to Farnborough, where the bodies of the Emperor and the Prince Imperial had been placed in a mausoleum.

The Queen of England has never wavered in her hearty friendship, but although the ex-Empress is a frequent guest at Windsor, she can never be induced to take part in any Court festivities, and although she is not forgotten in France, and thousands of bouquets and congratulations greet her on her name-day, nothing can really lift the weight of heavy grief, which has also told most painfully upon her appearance. The likenesses taken in the early days of her widowhood reveal her as an attractive woman still, in spite of her mourning and the lines of care about her eyes, but time since then seems to have pressed upon her with double force, and the woman of seventy-two might well be taken for eighty. Her hair is white, and her slender figure bent, without a trace of her former bewitching grace; dress has lost its charm; all about her bears the impress of sorrow; and the desire to please, which influenced her so strongly, is gone beyond recall. The pallid woman, with mournful eyes and lips compressed in bodily pain, or in a continual effort to restrain her tears, with tottering gait supported by a stick,

has nothing to remind one of the magnificent Empress of the French.

What a contrast between this old age and her youth, when she was all engrossed in rising higher and higher, and, while gaining experience and meeting with disappointment, never despairing, and preserving a heart perfectly free from grudging or bitterness! But her failing years are full of a grief, which *will* not lose its sting; she is without one ray of light to relieve the tedium of life, and is forced by a constant morbid power to dwell unceasingly but on two thoughts: the loss of her son and the last hours of her husband.

The sorrows of the ex-Empress cause her everywhere to be received with respect; and, while the Imperial diadem that once glittered on her brow was often the cause of jealousy and persecution, the crown of thorns which she now wears makes her great even in the eyes of her opponents, who have forgotten that the complaints of her extravagance were justified, and that her encouragement of luxury was a fact. They have forgotten that her zeal for the Church made her a bigot, and caused her to overlook that, while there may be slight differences of

creed, there is always the one great point of union: We are Christians, and therefore "members one of another."

The historian of the future, whose clear-sightedness will neither be dazzled by the romantic glamour of the Second Empire nor obscured by pity for the unhappy widow and mother, will not judge her so leniently as the present, but certainly far more justly than her detractors did in the palmy days of her power. He will find excuses for her errors, less because they were the heritage of her descent and education, than because they never overshadowed her better qualities, especially her warm heart and her dauntless courage. He will further recognise that her position as the wife of a usurper exposed her to trials which could not have affected a legitimate ruler, and that, in spite of difficulties, she filled her place with honour.

THE END.

